THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA

Literary Structure and Character in Proverbs 30

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Faculty of the
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For the Degree
Doctor of Sacred Theology

By
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Chapter 30 is the most enigmatic part of the entire Book of Proverbs. Scholars, past and present, have produced a wide range of interpretations and translations but the meaning and structure are still subject to debate. In the LXX, Chapter 30 is divided and displaced, while the Vg, Syr and Tg follow the MT order. Within the socioreligious context, the upper class is presented as consuming and destroying the lower one. The author presents himself as a “Godly Believer” and representative of the lower class, which is subjugated by the ungodly upper class, clarifying his thesis with references to biblical epistemology, sociology and biology. The author of Proverbs 30 also uses the formula three... four..., which is seen nowhere else in the entire Book of Proverbs and appears to indicate a chiastic function in the microstructures.

The translation and syntax presented in the dissertation have dealt with the all words, compounds and construct states, especially the difficult ones such as in vv. 1 and 30, where emendations are suggested. It was discovered that the so-called self-standing verses, such as vv. 10 and 17, are actually part of the chapter structure, especially v. 17, which seems to be pivotal, where the “Ungodly Hypocrite” who represents the entire ungodly society is doomed to be cursed and, thus, annihilated.

Besides attempting to provide a coherent translation of Proverbs that incorporates new insights into its structure and syntax, this dissertation also attempts to discover why Proverbs 30 was displaced in the LXX translation.
This dissertation by Dubravko Turalija fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Biblical Studies approved by Robert Miller II, Ph.D., as Director, and by Christopher Begg, S.T.D., Ph.D., and Andrew Gross, Ph.D. as Readers.

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Christopher Begg, S.T.D., Ph.D., Reader

Andrew Gross, Ph.D., Reader
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ABBREVIATIONS

- AB The Anchor Bible
- ACCS Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture
- AIOK Akten des Internationalen Orientalisten-Kongresses
- ANET Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the OT
- ANETS Ancient Near Eastern Texts and Studies
- AnOr Analecta Orientalia
- AOAT Alter Orient und Altes Testament
- AOTC Abingdon Old Testament Commentary
- ArtSTS ArtScroll Tanach Series
- AT Altes Testament
- ATD Das Alte Testament Deutsch
- AYB Anchor Yale Bible
- BASOR Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
- BBRSup Bulletin for Biblical Research Supplements
- BCOT Baker Commentary on the Old Testament
- BCOT Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament
- BEATAJ Beiträge zur Erforschung des Alten Testaments und des antiken Judentums
- BELT Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologicarum lovansiensium
- BHS Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
- BHQ Biblia Hebraica Quinta
- Bib Biblica
• BKAT  Biblischer kommentar Altes Testament
• BMW  The Bible in the Modern World
• BibOr  Biblica et Orientalia
• BOT  De Boeken van het Oude Testament
• BPAT  Bibbia Paoline L’Antico Testamento
• BTCB  Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible
• BTS  Biblisch-Theologische Studien
• BWANT  Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
• BZAW  Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
• ca.  circa
• CoBi  Commenti biblici
• CeBi  The Century Bible
• CBAA  The Catholic Biblical Association of America
• CBET  Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology
• CBQ  Catholic Biblical Quarterly
• CBSC  The Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges
• CHS  A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures
• CSP  Colectánea San Paciano
• DB  Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft
• DCH  D. J. A. Clines (ed.), Dictionary of Classical Hebrew
• DJBA  M. Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic
• DJPA  M. Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Palestinian Aramaic
• HS  Die Heilige Schrift
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<td>EB</td>
<td>The Expositor’s Bible</td>
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<td>EBDB</td>
<td>Encyclopedia Biblica: A Dictionary of the Bible</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECC</td>
<td>Eerdmans Critical Commentary</td>
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<tr>
<td>ENIBS/ABS</td>
<td>The Eugene A. Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship/American Bible Society</td>
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<td>FAT</td>
<td>Forschungen zum Alten Testament</td>
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<td>FLH</td>
<td>Folia Linguistica Historica</td>
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<td>Ges.</td>
<td>Gesenius’ Hebrew Grammar</td>
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<td>Gesenius</td>
<td>Gesenius Hebräisches und Aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament</td>
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<td>W. Baumgartner et al., Hebräisches und aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament</td>
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<td>IBHS</td>
<td>Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax</td>
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<td>ISBE</td>
<td>G. W. Bromiley (ed.), International Standard Bible Encyclopedia</td>
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<td>JHNES</td>
<td>The Johns Hopkins Near Eastern Studies</td>
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<td>JQR</td>
<td>Jewish Quarterly Review</td>
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<td>JSOP</td>
<td>The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</td>
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<td>JSS</td>
<td>Journal of Semitic Studies</td>
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<td>JTISup</td>
<td>Journal of Theological Interpretation Supplement</td>
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<tr>
<td>KEHAT</td>
<td>Kurzgefasstes exegetisches Handbuch zum Alten Testament</td>
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<td>KHCAT</td>
<td>Kurzen Hand-Commentars zum Alten Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>KS</td>
<td>Kršćanska sadašnjost</td>
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<tr>
<td>KTU</td>
<td>Keilalphabetische Texte aus Ugarit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KUSATU</td>
<td>Kleine Untersuchungen zur Sprache des Alten Testaments und seiner Umwelt</td>
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<tr>
<td>LD Comm.</td>
<td>Lectio Divina Commentaires</td>
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<td>LSJ</td>
<td>Liddell, H. G. and Scott, R. Greek-English Lexicon</td>
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<tr>
<td>LQ</td>
<td>Literary Quarterly</td>
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<tr>
<td>LXX</td>
<td>Septuagint</td>
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<tr>
<td>MGWJ</td>
<td>Monatsschrift für Geschichte und wissenschaft des Judentums</td>
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<tr>
<td>mp</td>
<td>masculine plural</td>
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<tr>
<td>ms</td>
<td>masculine singular</td>
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<tr>
<td>MT</td>
<td>Masoretic Text</td>
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<td>NAC</td>
<td>The New American Commentary</td>
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<td>OLA</td>
<td>Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta</td>
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<td>OLM</td>
<td>Old Testament Message</td>
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<td>OTC</td>
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<td>Old Testament Studies</td>
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- **OtSt**  
  *Oudtestamentische Studiën*

- **PB**  
  *The People’s Bible*

- **RB**  
  *Revue biblique*

- **SAA**  
  State Archives of Assyria

- **SB**  
  *Sources Bibliques*

- **SB**  
  *Subsidia biblica*

- **Sef**  
  *Sefarad*

- **SPIB**  
  Scripta Pontificii Institutii Biblici

- **SVMN**  
  Schriften des Vereins Meqîṣē Nirdāmîm

- **Syr**  
  Syriac

- **TDOT**  
  *G. J. Botterweck et al. (eds.), Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*

- **Tg**  
  Targum

- **ThJ**  
  *Theologischer Jahrbücher*

- **THB**  
  *Theologisch-homiletisches Bibelwerk*

- **THWAT**  
  *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*

- **TLZ**  
  *Theologische Literaturzeitung*

- **TynBul**  
  *Tyndale Bulletin*

- **UCOIP**  
  University of Chicago Oriental Institute Publications

- **UMI**  
  University Microfilm International

- **VT**  
  *VetusTestamentum*

- **VTSup**  
  VT, Supplements

- **WC**  
  Westminster Commentaries

- **WMANT**  
  Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament
- WZKM  Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes
- YJS   Yale Judaica Series
- ZAH   Zeitschrift für Althebraistik
- ZB    Zürcher Bibelkommentare
- ZDMG  Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

During my studies in Jerusalem at the Hebrew University and Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2006–2009, the rector of the PBI, Dr. Maurice Gilbert, S.J., a prolific biblical scholar, suggested that I work on Proverbs 30 for my licentiate. In the beginning, I concentrated on the first four verses of the chapter, especially the epistemology of a believer and teacher in vv. 2–4. At the Catholic University of America, under the guidance of Dr. Robert Miller II, I extended my focus on the entire chapter of Proverbs 30, keeping a similar title from my previous work on vv. 2–4 as the “Epistemology of a Teacher,” which now, in the prospective of entire chapter, refers to the “Godly Believer” who focuses all his attention on the “Ungodly Hypocrite” and ungodly society in Proverbs 30.

The Book of Proverbs is not organized by topic but mostly according to the periods when the chapters were collected. The vocabulary of the individual chapters (sea, ship, rivers, desert, cedar, city…) provides clues about where they were created, indicating that Chapter 30 is closely related to Chapter 31, which will be the next step in my investigation.

Since I was acquainted with Proverbs 30 from my previous investigation, my first step was to study previous translations in order to determine how far I could go with my own findings. The wealth of alternative scholarly approaches encouraged me to devote myself to the structures in Proverbs, especially Proverbs 30 and 31, as my contribution to the study of the biblical wisdom literature.

This investigation would have been impossible without the dedication and mentorship of Dr. Robert Miller II, who supported me with his scholarly suggestions and guided me to the literature. Throughout the subsequent stages of research, writing and revision, Dr. Miller’s consistent and thoughtful feedback has been invaluable. My gratitude to him is immeasurable.
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The translation of Proverbs 30 is an important part of this dissertation. For linguistic guidance and corrections, I am indebted to Dr. Andrew Gross, who, besides teaching the Semitic languages courses I attended, provided insightful comments.

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Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Mrs. Margaret Casman-Vuko, who helped me with my writing, correcting my drafts and providing suggestions, even while hospitalized with a life-threatening illness. For her motherly care for me, I dedicate this academic work to her.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION:

“THIS IS NOT WAY TO DO IT”

In Episode 114 of the cartoon series *The Cat in the Hat Knows a Lot About That*, adapted from the work of Dr. Seuss (Theodor Seuss Geisel), an anthropomorphic Cat and his friend, the enigmatic Fish, take two young children, Nick and Sally, on a journey to learn how to jump from the world’s greatest masters: the kangaroo, grasshopper and flea. Their vehicle, called a *thinga-ma-jigger*, changes its and their size to that of the aforementioned animals with a honk of the *shrinkamadoodle*. After meeting the grasshopper and shrinking to its size, the Cat suggests that they continue with the adventure and meet the smallest jumper in the created world: the flea. To do so, they would have to become microscopic in size. The Fish opposes the Cat’s proposal, fearing that, by this final adventure, they would completely disappear. A similar sense of foreboding is found in Proverbs 30. A godly person protests the extreme provocation and actions of an ungodly person, arguing that there must be a limit to human actions and reflections (Prov 30:1, 32). Otherwise, he who ignores the rules or precepts must bear the unintended consequences, not only upon himself but also upon society (cf. Prov 30:1, 33).

The Book of Proverbs is a text that provides two interpretative “moments”—King Solomon (cf. Prov 1:1; 10:1) and King Hezekiah (cf. Prov 25:1). Since Solomon was the epitome of worldly wisdom,¹ although there are two collections, Solomon’s (Proverbs 1–24) and Hezekiah’s (Proverbs 25–31), the entire Book of Proverbs is traditionally attributed to his authorship.²

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Various semantic fields are noted in the Book of Proverbs, including the anthropological, ethnological, religious, sociological and philosophical. The polyvalence of the application of a proverb to different fields makes it difficult to define the structure of the entire book. In other words, the structure of the Book of Proverbs could depend on many different thematic and semantic elements. Although scholars generally divide the Book of Proverbs according to seven superscriptions, it is easiest to divide it according to the two explicit biblical names with whom the Book of Proverbs is associated, Solomon and Hezekiah, two kings enthroned in Jerusalem. This is how the LXX divided the book (see the conclusion of this dissertation). King Solomon reigned from ca. 970 to 931 B.C.E. and King Hezekiah from 722 to 694 B.C.E., separated by an interval of approximately three hundred years.

Since the topics in the Book of Proverbs intermingle, it is difficult to divide its chapters on a topical basis. The types and styles of writing in the Book of Proverbs also range from proverbial to poetic (cf. Proverbs 8; 1:20–33; 31:10–31) and from moralistic and didactic (cf. Proverbs 30; 1:8–19; 1

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4:1–9; 31:1–9) to theological (Prov 3:1–12). Thus, the simplest division of the Book of Proverbs should be made according to the two collections, the collection of King Solomon (Proverbs 1–24) and the collection of King Hezekiah (Proverbs 25–31).

Some scholars of the Pentateuch, Historical Books and Prophets avoid citing Proverbs 30 in their works, possibly due to its many lexical and syntactical difficulties or because of its affiliation with the so-called “Appendix to the Book of Proverbs.” However, there is no objective reason to separate Chapters 30 and 31 from the rest of the Book of Proverbs, especially from Hezekiah’s collection as the final proverbial contribution to the book. Furthermore, the Masoretic Text (MT), Vulgate (Vg), Syriac (Syr) and, especially, the Septuagint (LXX) consider Chapters 30 and 31 to be integral parts of the Book of Proverbs. The dislocation of Chapter 30 in the LXX leads modern scholars to think of Chapters 30 and 31 as appendices. Moreover, due to the appellatives אָגוּר in Prov 30:1 and הָעָלֶל Prov 31:1, some scholars attribute Proverbs 30 and 31 to extra-biblical material. This is, however, unwarranted because there is no compelling reason to separate the chapters from the other literary material found in the Book.

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7 See the conclusion of this dissertation.
of Proverbs. When many parallels, “didactic poems,” particular words or themes are analyzed in the Book of Proverbs, their connection with Chapters 30 and 31 is indisputable. Thus, Scherer finds a connection among Prov 6:12–15, 6:16–19 and 30:24–28, while Kieweler finds parallels between Prov 6:17; 15:11 and 30:15f. In addition, Boström sees parallels between Prov 5:15 and 30:20, and Prov 20:20 and 30:17, while Philips argues that the fear of God forms inclusio, “a single bracketing idea to the book as whole” with the “thematic foundation-statement” of Prov 1:7 and “closing poem” of Prov 31:30. In this regard, there is no strict and clear structure of Proverbs 1–29 that would exclude Chapters 30 and 31 as integral segments of the last collection of the book.

Not only is Proverbs 30 dislocated in the LXX but it is also divided into two separate and different sections (Prov 30:1–14 and 30:15–31). The division of Proverbs 30 seems unsuitable for the structure of the MT. The structure that exists in Proverbs 30 follows the Masoretic unity of the chapter,
which understands Prov 30:1 not as an argument of foreign provenance\textsuperscript{21} but as part of royal ancient Israel’s wisdom, with the emphasis on the apostasy revealed in the “Ungodly Hypocrisy.”\textsuperscript{22}

The intention of this dissertation is to present Proverbs 30 as a coherent and structurally unified chapter, not as an appendix but as an integral part of the Book of Proverbs.\textsuperscript{23} Furthermore, the dissertation will focus on the ungodly provocation of the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” epistemology and theology of “Godly Believer,” and his comment and protest against the ungodliness in the Israelite society promoted and supported by its leaders. As an introduction to the complexity of the various approaches to Proverbs 30, “A Survey of Past Renditions of Proverbs 30” is presented in Chapter Two of this dissertation. The section “Denotation, Connotation and Diction in Proverbs 30” in Chapter Three helps reveal the chiastic structure of Proverbs 30, as presented and elaborated in Chapter Four. Chapter Five, based on the structure presented in Chapter Four and the explicit and implicit royal elements in Chapter 30, answers the question who is speaking to whom about what in Proverbs 30. The Chapter Six is the dissertation’s conclusion, which tries to answer the questions why the message is ungodly, why it is a provocation, why the provocation is hypocritical and, ultimately, who the “Ungodly Hypocrite” could be.

\textsuperscript{21}The foreign origin of Prov 30:1 is extensively presented in Chapter One of this dissertation.

\textsuperscript{22}Roland Murphy (Ecclesiastes [WBC 23A; Nashville; Thomas Nelson, 1992] 125) instead attributes Qoh 12:9, Prov 30:1 along with Prov 31:1 to “general wisdom tradition.”

\textsuperscript{23}The structure is widely elaborated in Chapter Three of this dissertation.
CHAPTER TWO:

A SURVEY OF PAST RENDITIONS OF PROVERBS 30

Proverbs 30 poses a challenge to exegetes. To grasp its composition, structure and meaning, every verse must be fully understood. There have been various interpretations of the difficult first verse and conflicting opinions on the composition and structure of the entire chapter. The identities of both the speaker and addressee in Proverbs 30 have been debated and the coherence of the 33-verse-long discourse has been disputed. This dissertation will focus on understanding Proverbs 30 in its entirety.

Scholars have attempted to shed new light on familiar material, while taking earlier interpretations of Proverbs into account. This chapter will provide an overview of the various interpretations of Proverbs 30, from early translations to current exegesis. Original contributions, borrowings from previous exegetical material and radical propositions will be identified and analyzed.

1. A Diachronic Survey of the Various Interpretations of Prov 30:1

The problem of the first verse of Proverbs 30 is not only morphological but also lexical and syntactic. The MT reads Prov 30:1 as follows: דִּבְרֵי אָגֻר בִּן־יָקֶה הַמַַּ֫שָ֥א נְאֻ֣ם הַַ֭גֶּבֶר לְאִִּתִּיאֵֵ֑ל לְאִִּ֖יתִּיאֵ֣ל וְאֻכִָֽל. Translators have regularly found ambiguity in every morpheme of the verse, especially in the complex words הַמַּ֫שָ֥א and נְאֻ֣ם, as well as the palindromes לְאִּֽתִּיאֵֵ֑ל and לְאִִּ֖יתִּיאֵ֣ל, which are synonyms or homonyms, they create even more problems in the syntactic composition of the Hebrew clause. Therefore, translators and exegesis have tried to emend the aforementioned words and compounds in multiple ways. A diachronic survey of past translations of Prov 30:1 will provide an understanding of various scholarly approaches to this verse and its segue into the following stanzas of Chapter 30.

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Interpretations of Prov 30:1 have differed through the centuries in a variety of ways. The oldest Greek, Syriac, Targumic Aramaic and Latin translations disagree. If the LXX used the same Vorlage as the MT, then the LXX has only partially understood the text, translating it as follows: το ὑς ἑμοὺς λόγους νιὲ φοβήθητι και δεξάμενος αὐτοὺς μετανόει τάδε λέγει ὁ ἀνήρ τοῖς πιστεύονσιν θεῷ καὶ παύσαι [דָּלָי] (“My son, fear my words, and when you receive them repent. This says the man to those who believe in God, and I quiet myself”). Reading v. 1 in this way, the LXX understands it positively, emphasizing the speaker’s words about repentance to the well-disposed addressee. Instead, the Syriac (Syr) and Targum Ketuvim (Tg) translations emphasize prophecy and are much more focused on the power and importance of the revealing words. According to the number of word items and the composition of v. 1, the Syr translation is much closer to the MT than the LXX: מָלַוי דָאַגְר בֶּר יַקֵּה דַקְבִּל נַבִּיוֹתָא וָאֶמַר גָבָּרָא לְאִּיתִּיאֵל וָאֵצַל לְאִּיתִּיאֵל וָאֻכְל (“These are the words of Agur the son of Yakeh, who received the prophecy and prevailed. He said to Itiel”). The Tg translation tries to resolve the problem of Prov 30:1 with the following emendations and morphological additions: מָלַוי דָאַגְר בֶּר יַקֵּה נבִּיוֹתָא וָאֶמַר לְאִּיתִּיאֵל וָאֵצַל לְאִֿיתִּיאֵל (“The words of Agur, son of Yakeh, who received the prophecy, and declared to the man Itiel, Ithiel and Uchal”). St. Jerome (Vg), like the LXX translators, avoiding the term “prophecy,” affirms the speaker’s authority with a testimony of his closeness to God: Verba Congregantis filii

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Vomentsis visio quam locutus est vir cum quo est Deus et qui Deo secum morante confortatus (72) ait
(“The words of the collector, the son of the vomiter; the vision about which the man spoke with whom God is and who is fortified by God dwelling with him, said:”). On the basis of the Vg translation, a later Latin manuscript used the verse as a vade mecum to compare the Greek and Latin Church: Hoc est congregantis, Ecclesia Graecæ, id est Ecclesiastes—vomentis, congregatio Latine (“This is the Gatherer—the Greek Church. In other words, this is Ecclesiastes or the Vomiter—the Latin Church”). Furthermore, Cornelius a Lapide (1567–1637), an early 17th–century commentator on the Vg, found a link in the Hebrew roots between unsatisfied human desire in the introductory קיא (“one who is vomiting”) and the ultimate human destiny in the concluding אכל (“one who is consumed”).

Based on the Masoretic punctuation, Jewish tradition kept the morphemes of v. 1 as they are in the MT. On the other hand, the LXX left a very strong impact on the Orthodox, Armenian and Coptic Church translations, as well as other ancient treatments of the text, such as the Vetus Latina (VL), Syro-

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5 Lorenzo Cuppi (“The Treatment of Personal Names in the Book of Proverbs from the Septuagint to the Masoretic Text,” Greek Scripture and the Rabbis [eds. T. M. Law and A. Salvesen: CBET 66; Leuven: Peeters, 2012] 35) places the verb לשת (“to eat,” “to feed”), which seems discordant with the Latin confortatus, while the abstract form of the verb כה fits well with the developed meaning of the lexeme. See also George Sauer, Die Sprüche Agurs (BWANT 5; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1963) 98.


8 Cornelius a Lapide, Comentarius in Salomonis Proverbia (Venetii [Venice]: Ludovico Portocarero, 1702) 622.

Hexapla, Old Gothic, Ethiopic, Persian, and Arabic. In the same way, the Roman Catholic Church followed Jerome’s translation for centuries, while later Christian denominations mainly followed the MT.

Based on the MT and rabbinical exegeses of the 10th-century, an anonymous Hebrew commentary on Proverbs from the year 1340 in the Merzbacher Collection presents the beginning of Chapter 30 as follows: “Words of Agur, son of Jake: Even that man I have worn out—a warrior—with questioning.” Here is found one of the earliest known emendations of the complex morpheme לאיתי as the Hiph. of לאי (“to toil,” “to weary”), which would be widely utilized in some later versions of Prov 30:1.

According to Henricus F. Muehlau (1839–1914, henceforth Mühlau), the scholar Johann Coccejus (1603–1669) was one of the first modern commentators to attempt to understand v. 1 as follows:

Sermones Agur filii Jakeh, pronuntiatum. Dixit ille vir Leithiel, Leithiel veuchal (hoc est, qui quidem habet robur, sed cogitum dicere. Defatigatus sum (the Hiph. of לאי) circa Deum omnipotentem, et tamen, qùm hoc dicit, potest gloriri—ἐνδυνάμωθω, ἱκανόθω (“Leitiel, the man spoke: Leitiel we-Uchal that is one who, indeed, has the strength but is forced to speak: I have wearied myself over Almighty God. And, yet, when he says this, he is able to boast of being strong and able [ἐνδυνάμωθω, ἱκανόθω]). Indeed,

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Coccejus was the first scholar who, utilizing the verbs לאי and אכל, tried to explain the difficult final morphemes Leithiel wa-Uchal but was not the first one who used these roots in the interpretation of Prov 30:1 (cf. Mühlau’s explanation, De proverbiorum, 5 n. 3). Thomas Cartwright (1535–1603) tried to resolve the same problem of Prov 30:1 by reconciling v. 1 and v. 2: Verborum Aguris filii Iake comportatio: dictum viri de Ihiele, de Ihiele [inquam] & Ucale [sit] (“Words of Agur son of Lake, collection: Statement by the man to Ihiel [and I say that] Ucale [is...]”). Although there was a notable impulse among 17th-century scholars to produce coherent translations of v. 1 and v. 2, the relationship of these verses still remained undefined.

One of the first successful attempts to produce a coherent translation of Prov 30:1 was by the 18th-century exegete Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791). He suggested reading all the morphemes in the verse not as proper nouns but rather as appellatives. Thus, his translation, as the direct speech of a

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13 Johannes Coccejus (Operum Johannis Coccei [Amstelodami [Amsterdam]: Johannis Someren, 1673] 2:85–86) explains: In confessione humane impotentiae non tam seipsum loquentem facit, quam aliam, qui fortissimus fuerit et vicerit; cui nomen facit a fortitudine (הגבר), a victoria (אכל)—quod significat valui, vel valeo. Interim eidem tribuit nomen לאיתיאל, quod sonat laboravi vel lassatus sum Dei causa. Periphrasis haec esto, si quis est, qui ingenio maximo preaditus, et animi fortitudine congressus est cum Deo, ad eum cognoscendum vel ampectendum maximo cum labore et defatigatione; atque etiam vicit, ut Deum cognoverit et amplius sit, atque retinuerit; eum oportet haec dicere. Quando ita haec verba evolvimus et vim illorum consideramus, ultro sese inginit cogitatio Abrahami et Jacobi, qui uterque a Deo tentatus est et vicit. Et hi sunt facti exemplaria fidei. Nec multum abludit nomen ישראל, לאיתיא, ואכל, nisi quod hoc in prima persona formam gloriationis habet illud autem quasi in tertia formam habet divinae laudationis (“In the confession of human impotence, he does not speak much about himself, but partially as one who was the strongest and who won and whose name is derived from ‘courage’ (הגבר) and from ‘victory’ (אכל), which means:—I was powerful, or simply I am powerful. However, he also attributes similar names to himself like לאיתיא, which means:—I tried or I’m exhausted (I declined) because of God. The paraphrase for these notions would be: everyone should say this if he is very gifted with discernment and with severity of soul, or if he has met God, embracing him with his own effort and to the point of exhaustion, or if he comprehended and embraced God, and maintained this. When we tried to consider the meaning of these words, they still tempt us to think about Abraham and Jacob, who were both tempted by God and won. Ultimately, they have become models of the faith. Do not match the names לאיתיא, ואכל, unless this in the first person has the form of boasting, while the other in the third person has a form of divine praise”).

14 Thomas Cartwright, Commentarii Succincti et Dilucidi in Proverbia Salomonis (ed. J. Polyandry; Amstelrodami [Amsterdam]: Laurentus, 1632) 1262.
sage, provided a new approach to understanding v. 1: “Sammle meine Worte mein Sohn, nim den göttlichen Spruch an der Man über Gott habe ich mich bemüher (*דרי), mich bemüher und die (meine) Untersuchung aufgegeben (*לך)” (“Gather my words, my son[!] Accept the divine saying Man[!] I toiled about God, I toiled and [my] examination I have forsaken”).¹⁵ Michaelis further explains: “Ich habe meine Untersuchungen aufgegeben und dem geglaubet was er (Gott) selbst von sich sagt” (“I have left my examination and believed what God was saying of himself”).¹⁶ This short exegetical comment was included by Michaelis in his second translation ten years later, in which he acknowledged the necessity for intense human examination of God that can only lead to an awareness of human intellectual inadequacy and, finally, to exclusive reliance on and belief in God: “Ich habe geendiger die Untersuchung aufgegeben” (“I came to an end forsaking the examination”)¹⁷ Michaelis’ new approach encouraged 18th- and 19th-century scholars to investigate the complicated vocables of the verse further. Thus, J. G. Jaeger (henceforth Jäger), following the LXX translation and, based on Michaelis’ interpretation, was among the first scholars who attempted to reconcile the MT and LXX texts of Prov 30:1, not recognizing the ambiguity in the very first part of the MT, where the names of Agur and Yakeh are mentioned, but looked mostly at the second part of the verse, with its synonymic and homonymic terms, translating them not as personal names but as appellatives.¹⁸ Hensler also excluded the possibility of appellatives in the first part


¹⁶ Ibid., 95-96.


of v. 1, proposing to take the article ה from נָשָּׁאָה and attribute it to the name יְקָהָה, thus reading: “Worte des Agur, Sohn des יְקָהָה, (“obedience”): “Ein feierlicher Ausspruch: ermüdet hab ich Gott, ermüdet Gott! Doch ich hörte auf [כלי]” (“The words of Agur, son of יְקָהָה, a solemn saying: I've wearied God, wearied God! But I stopped”). Following Hensler’s reading of the first part of the verse as “Words of Agur, Yakeh’s son…” and Michaelis’ translation “I toiled about God…,” scholars as Schulz/Strack (die Kundmachung [promulgation] for נָשָּׁאָה) and Frankenberg (who uses the term dahingeschwunden for כלי) have continued with the investigation of this problematic verse.

Michaelis’ translation was partially incorporated in Hitzig’s new translation: “Worte Agurs, Sohn dessen, welchem, oder derjenigen, welcher Massa gehorcht:—Ich habe mich abgemüht um Gott und wurde stumpf [כלל]” (“Agur’s words to his son, or those who obeyed Massa: ‘I toiled about God and became dull’”). Prior to Hitzig’s translation, the lexeme נָשָּׁאָה had regularly been understood not as a proper name but as an appellative (“prophecy” [LXX], “collection” [Vg], “divine words” (cf. Michaelis). In addition, Hitzig also changed the well-established last verb of the

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22 Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on the Proverbs of Solomon (translated by M. G. Easton; Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament; Edinburgh: Clark, 1882) 262.
verse כְּלִי (cf. LXX, as well as Aquila; Michaelis) to כְּלִי ("make complete;" cf. Ezek 27:4,11). C. F. Keil saw Hitzig’s translation as a link between Proverbs 30 and 31: “Worte des Agur Sohnes der Gebieterin von Massa [die Mutter des Lemuel in Prov. 31]” (“Words of Agur the son of the mistress of Massa [the mother of Lemuel in Proverbs 31]”), whereas in the names Ithiel and Uchal, he finds two classes of imaginary characters. The first of these, Ithiel (“God-with-me”), has intimate communion with God and the higher insight of wisdom (Ithiel), while the second, Uchal (“I-am-strong”), is characterized by a strong personal ego and practical atheistic freethinking.²³ Stuart, adopting Hitzig’s solution of the noun חַּשְׁא, revived Michaelis’ solution of the translation of v. 1: “The words of Agur, the son of her who was obeyed in Massa. Thus spoke the man: I have toiled for God, I have toiled for God and have ceased (כְּלִי).”²⁴

Bunsen’s reading of v. 1 is mostly consistent with Hitzig’s translation, except for several elements. The first is his understanding of the noun חַּשְׁא, not as an unknown location but rather as a tribe or people of the southern part of Israel (cf. Gen 25:14), therefore proposing the less objectionable adjectival emendation חַּשְׁאי (“Massaite”). Second, Bunsen, like Michaelis, introduced two direct clauses in v. 1. Third, instead of the verb כְּלִי, Bunsen turned to Michaelis’ solution of the verb כְּלִי and translates: “Worte Agurs des Sohnes Jakeh, des Mannes von Massa (Jakeh von Massa). Spruch des Mannes:—Ich mühte mich ab um Gott. Ich mühte mich ab um Gott: und ich schwand dahin” (“The words of Agur, son of Yakeh, the Massaite man (Jakeh von Massa): ‘I toiled over God. I toiled over God: and I dwindled’”).²⁵

²⁴ Moses Stuart, Commentary on the Book of Proverbs (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1860) 401.
²⁵ Cf. Christian C. J. Bunsen, Vollständiges Bibelwerk für Gemeinde (Leipzig: J. U. Brodhaus, 1858) 197–98. A similar proposal regarding the Edomite tribes was offered by Carl Steuernagel, Die Einwanderung der israelitischen Stämme in Kanaan: Historisch-kritische Untersuchung (Berlin: C. A. Schwetschke und Sohn, 1901) 58; cf. also Sauer, Sprüche, 97; Delitzsch, Commentary, 266.
Busen’s proposed reading was accepted by Böttcher, who offered another rendition of the noun הַמַשָא:

“Worte Agurs, Sohn des Jaqe, des Massaiten. Spruch des Mannes:—Abgemüht habe ich mich um Gott, abgemüht nichtig, und ein Ende gemacht [כלי]” (Agur’s words, son of Yakeh, the Massaite: ‘I toiled about God, I toiled (for) nothing and put an end to it’).

Böttcher has punctuated the noun הַמַשָא as הִּמַשָאִי, with the same meaning of a tribal affiliator: “the Massaite.” Unlike Böttcher, whose translation was suspect because he places the particle לא (“not,” “nothing”) after its subject or predicate, which is unacceptable, scholars such as Kamphausen, Delitzsch, Kautzsch, Wildeboer, van der Ploeg, Ringgren and Zimmerli, Schenider, and Scoralick follow Hitzig’s/Bunsen’s alternative reading with the second part of the verse understood partially as an indirect and partially as a direct clause: “…Aussprüche des Mannes, der mit Gott sich abmüht:—Ich mühte mich ab um Gott und erlag [כלי]” (“The utterance of the man who toiled with God: ‘I toiled to God and died’”).

Understanding the palindrome לאיתיאל as deriving from the verb לאי and the noun לא as a part of the phrase לאיתיא לאיתיא prompted W. C. L. Ziegler to explain the paliglogia of לאיתיאל לאיתיאל.

Since the verb לאי “nowhere takes after its form the accusative of the object of weariness,” Ziegler took the noun לא of the Masoretic text as a vocative and read: “Gott! Ich bin müde—ich bin müde Gott!” (“O

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27 Cf. Delitzsch, Commentary, 271.
28 Adolf H. H. Kamphausen, Die Sprüche, Bunsens Bibelwerk—Vollständiges Bibelwerk für die Gemeinde (Leipzig: J. U. Brodhaus, 1868) 385–86; Delitzsch, Commentary, 249; Gerrit D. Wildeboer, Die Sprüche (Freiburg: Mohr, 1897) 84–85; Johannes van der Ploeg, Prediker (BOT 8; Roermond en Maaseik: J. J. Romen & Zonen Uitgevers, 1952) 100; Helmer Ringgren and Walther Zimmerli, Sprüche/Prediger (ATD 16/1; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1962) 114.
God! I am tired. I am tired, O God!"").\(^{31}\) This proposal had a remarkable impact on later scholars such as Müntinghe\(^ {32}\) and, especially, Mühlau, who, however, viewed the first part of the sentence as a title: *Verba Auguri filii Jake, effatum viri Massaïtæ* (“the words of Agur, the son of Yakeh, Messianite”), in which a new and later very influential emendation of the noun הַמַשָא was offered, no longer as “the Kingdom of Massa,” as Hitzig claimed, or as an affiliation with a particular tribe as Bunsen and Böttcher thought, but rather as a reference to origin, מִמַשָא (“from Massa”). In the second part of v. 1, Mühlau accepted Ziegler’s vocative expression (Gott!) along with Michaelis’ conclusion: *Defatigatus sum, o Deus, defatigatus sum, o Deus, viribusque deficiur* [כלי] (“I toiled, O God, I toiled and have been defeated”).\(^ {33}\) Mühlau’s translation was adopted by Zöckler, Bertheau, Horton, Kautzsch, Wildeboer, Martin, Knabenbauer and others.\(^ {34}\) Examples of the same approach are also offered later by Clifford, Longman and Perdue: “The words of Agur, son of Yaqeh, the man of Massa. The oracle of the man: I am weary, O God, I am weary, O God, and I am exhausted (כלי).”\(^ {35}\) Following the same line, Franklyn, Vigini, Steinmann, Fox, Sæbø and Cuppi read v. 1 as follows: “The words of Agur the son of Yakeh, the


\(^{32}\) Hermann Müntinghe, *Die Sprüche Salomo’s* (Aus dem holländischen übersetz von M. J. Scholl; Frankfurt am Main: Jägersche Buchhandlung, 1800) 58, 98.

\(^{33}\) Muehlau, *De proverbiorum*, v (5).


pronouncement, the oracle of the man:—I am weary, God, I am weary, God, and have wasted away (יֵילָדָא).”

A solution, with a completion of the aforementioned interpretations, is offered by E. Strömberg Krantz, who reads the second part of v. 1 as follows: “…The word of a man not supported by God: I am weary, O God, and exhausted (יֵילָדָא).”

Besides the aforementioned understandings of Prov 30:1, some prominent scholars offered a different approach. Thus, Ziegler took the last lexeme of v. 1 (וְאֻכָל) derived from the verbal root יָכַל with the negation, which, excluding the necessity of the extreme human examination of God, puts the emphasis on human piety and simplicity of heart as the only way ad exclusiva dependentia humana ad Deum (to the exclusive human dependence on God) and translated: “Sprüche Agurs, des Sohn Jakeh—Gottessprüche. So sprach der Mann! Gott! Ich bin müde, ich bin müde Gott! Und schweige! (יֵילָדָא)—absolve orationem meam!” (“The proverbs of Agur, son of Yakeh—God’s proverbs: O God! I am tired. I am tired, O God! And silent! (יֵילָדָא)—absolve my language”). Bickell, who, following Michaelis’ influential interpretation, adopted Ziegler’s choice of the final verb and human failure in search of God, translated: “…Ausspruch des Mannes der sich um Gott abgemüht [den Kopf zerbrochen] hat: ich habe mich um Gott abgemüht und es nicht vermocht יָכַל (אֶל)!” (“…the saying of the man who toiled about God [smashing his head]: I toiled about God and that is over”). Bickell’s idea was later supported by Alonso Schökel

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38 Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 353.

and Vilchez Lindez, who also adopted Mühlau’s proposition for the lexeme אַשֶּׁר: “Massime di Agûr, figlio di Iakè, massaita. Oracolo dell’uomo: Ho faticato, Dio, ho faticato e desisto” (“The maxims of Agur, the son of Yakeh, Massaite. The oracle of the man: I toiled, God, I toiled and desist”). Cheyne, in earlier academic studies, relied completely on Bickell’s translation but subsequently offered his original alternative: “Agur, the son of Yakeh, the author of wise poems, the words of the man (called) hak kohéleth (the Preacher; cf. Eccles 1:1), the guilty one, to those who believe in God.”

On the basis of the same verb, הַמַשָא, Geiger found an interrogative clause here: “Words of the gatherer (אגור), son of the obedient one (יקה). Dichterwort (משׂא). The proverb of man: I toiled in vain about God, I toiled in vain about God; why should I be able to do it (יכל)?” Baumgartner, comparing the LXX translation with the MT and following Mühlau’s previous interpretation, accepted Geiger’s choice of the final verb while shifting the meaning from human defeat to successful toil and renders an affirmative conclusion: יָכֵל—“praevalens viribus fuit… et non pas à כלה comme l’a fait LXX” (“I prevailed … and not with כלה as does the LXX”). A similar approach has been offered by Sauer:

“Worte Agurs des Sohnes des Jaqäh, der Massa (aus Nordkanaan). Spruch des Mannes: ich habe mich gemüht, Gott, ich habe mich gemüht, Gott, auf dass ich’s könnte (begreifen) יָכֵל” (“The words of Agur the son of Yakeh, the Massa[ite]. The saying of the man: I have toiled, God, I have striven, God, that I

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40 Luis Alonso Schökel and José Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi (traduzione di T. Tosatti e P. Brugnoli; CB; Rome: Borla, 1988) 602.
42 Abraham Geiger, Urschrift Übersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der innern Entwicklung der Judenheits (Breslau: Julius Hainauer, 1857) 61.
could [understand] it”). Sauer also offered an alternative to the noun מַשָא here, reading the word as is without emendation and understanding it as referring to an individual member of a tribe. The same idea is also accepted by Clifford.

De Wette published a new alternative reading of v. 1: “Worte Agur’s des Sohnes Yakeh’s, schwere Worte. Der Ausspruch des Mannes an Ithiel ist: mit mir ist Gott, darum vermag ich’s [אל]” (“The words of Agur, the son of Yakeh, difficult words. The saying to Ithiel is: God is with me, this is why I can”). This translation was influential; it is adopted and modified by Ewald, who read v. 1 as follows: “Worte Agur’s, Jaque’s Sohnes. Der Hochspruch welchen sprach der Held zu Mit-mir-Gott, zu Mit-mir-Gott und ich bin stark.” (“the words of Agur, the son of Jake. The proverb which the hero spoke to God-with-me, to God-with-me and I am strong”). Grätz, relying on Theodotion’s Greek translation, modified Ewald’s proposition, suggesting an elegant emendation of the Masoretic text reading it as follows: דובָּר אֵל לְיוּ־יִתִּי: לא־הַיִּל הָגְבָּר׃ נאם הַמַשֵׂאל׃ (Agur, son of Yakeh, proverb-teller [Spruchdichter]: words of a man who has no strength [לא־חיל]: O that God would be with me and I would be able.” On the basis of Ewald’s translation, Miller offered a similar positive treatment: “Words of I-Fear, Son of the Godly, the Prophecy: The strong man speaks to God-with-me, to God with me and I am able.” Later, Hunter’s reading and comment on v. 1 were substantively based on Miller’s translation.

A variation of the same syntagma (“mit-mir-Gott”) was also made by Kuhn, who translated the last part

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44 Sauer, Sprüche, 96–97, 112.
45 Clifford, Proverbs, 256.
of v. 1, relying on Grätz’s emendation of the MT: “...O, if God were with me. If God were with me, I (would) endure (the burden).”\textsuperscript{51} One of the recent variations on the basis of the “(nicht) mit-mir-Gott” rendering is offered by Richter: “Die Worte Agurs, des Sohnes von Jakeh: Kann jemand sagen ([es handelt sich um] Menschenwort): ‘Gott ist nicht mit mir, Gott ist nicht mit mir, aber ich werde es (schon) schaffen’” (“The word of Agur, son of Jakeh: Can anyone tell me [the word of man]: ‘God is not with me, God is not with me, but I will manage it’”).\textsuperscript{52}

The 20\textsuperscript{th}-century scholar Gemser returned to Michaelis’ idea of toiling and Ewald’s idea of personal success, and translates v. 1 as follows: “Worte Agurs, des Sohnes Jakes, der Ausspruch, ‘den er tat’. Eingebung des Mannes, ‘der sich abmühte mit Gott, abmühnte mit Gott und siegte’ (“Words of Agur, the son of Yakeh, saying ‘that he did.’ Inspiration of man, who toiled with God, toiled with God and triumphed [ךְלָל]”).\textsuperscript{53} On this foundation, Plöger continued the same perspective, including Mühlau’s proposition concerning Jake’s origin: “The words of Agur, son of Jake, (from) Massa. Proverb of man, who toiled about God (sich abmühte um Gott): I have toiled, O God, that I was able to understand it (ךְלָל).”\textsuperscript{54} A recent suggestion made by D. Barthélemy in BHQ follows Gemser’s and Plöger’s toiling alternative with personal success and reads v. 1 as follows: “…I have wearied myself, O God, I have wearied myself, O God and I did succeed (ךְלָל).”\textsuperscript{55} On this basis, a compromise between the proper noun

\textsuperscript{51} Gottfried Kuhn, \textit{Beiträge zur Erklärung des Salomonischen Spruchbuches} (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1931) 77.

\textsuperscript{52} Hans-Friedemann Richter, “Hielt Agur sich für den Dümmsten aller Menschen? (Zu Prov 30,1–4),” \textit{ZAW} 113 (2001) 419–21, here 419.

\textsuperscript{53} Berend Gemser, \textit{Sprüche Salomos} (HAT 16; Tübingen: Mohr, 1937) 78.

\textsuperscript{54} Otto Plöger, \textit{Sprüche Salomos (Proverbia)} (BKAT 17; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukircher Verlag, 1984) 351.

and appellative alternatives has recently been offered by Waltke: “The saying of Agur son of Jakeh. An oracle. The inspired utterance of the man to Ithiel: I am weary, O God, but I can prevail (יכל).”

Although emendations of the words in Prov 30:1 seem to be necessary for understanding the meaning of the following verses, some prominent exegetes continued to read the difficult lexemes as proper nouns. Doederlein, Michaelis’s contemporary, suggested reading Chapter 30 as an exchange between a pagan and a Jew. Seeing in the name Agur a pious believer and in Ithiel a rich pagan who would like to understand Jewish religion, Doederlein translates: “Worte Agurs, Jikahs Sohn. Eine Spruchsammlung. Ein Gottesspruch des Propheten an Ithiel, an Ithiel und Uchal” (“Agur’s sayings, the son of Jikah. An anthology: A word of God of the prophet to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Uchal”). Similar versions are provided by Durell, Hodgson, Herder, Gesenius, Holden, Umbreit, Muenscher, Perowne and Malan who read: “The words of Agur, the son of Yakeh, (even) the prophecy (Durell: “charge or lesson;” Hodgson, “these sentences;” Herder: Machtreden) which he spake unto Ithiel, even unto Ithiel and Ucal.” Umbreit also offered a similar translation: “The words of Agur the son of Yakeh, the (God’s)
utterance. The saying of the man to Ithiel to Ithiel and Uchal.\(^{59}\) Isidore Myers rendered Prov 30:1 in a similar manner: “These are the words of Agur, Yakeh’s son. This is the Oracle by him begun. The man, to make a declaration led. Thus to Ithiel and to Ucal said.”\(^{60}\) Similar translations to that of Myers are offered by such scholars as Barucq, Garrett, Leeuwen, Whybray, Ehlke, Dell, Koptak, Ross, Yoder and Alter: “The words of Agur, the son of Yakeh, the oracle, the saying of the man to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal.”\(^{61}\) Crawford Toy follows the same line: “The words of Agur Ben-Yakeh. Inspired utterance of the man to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ukal.”\(^{62}\) The translation by Pié y Ninot is also along similar lines, although here with Müntinghe’s reading of the noun נַפְשָׁה and omitting the “dittography” of the name Ithiel: “Words of Agur, son of Jaqué from Masá, Oracle of man for Itel and for Ucal.”\(^{63}\) Arndt Meinhold uses the same foundation as the previous readings, yet offers a possible alternative: “Die Worte Agurs, des Sohnes Jakes, (aus) Massa. Der Ausspruch des Mannes zu Itiel (‘Mit mir ist Gott’), zu Itiel und Ukal (‘Ich vermog’)?” (“Agur’s words, Jake’s son [from] Massa. The man’s proverb to Itiel [‘God is with me’], to Itiel and Ukal [‘I can’”].\(^{64}\)

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\(^{63}\) Salvador Pié y Ninot, *La Palabra de Dios en los Libros Sapienciales* (CSP xvii; Barcelona: Herder, 1972) 82.

\(^{64}\) Arndt Meinhold, *Die Sprüche* (ZB 2; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1991) 494.
Some modern Jewish scholars, following the above understanding of v. 1, exclude any possibility for determining Yakeh’s origin. Thus, Plaut, Kravitz and Olitzky read v. 1 as follows: “The words of Agur, son of Yakeh: the burden. The person says to Ithiel, Ithiel and Ucal.” Ginsburg and Weinberger translate it in the same manner: “These are the words of Agur son of Yakeh, the prophecy, the words of this man to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ucal.”

In 1954, Torrey proposed a new theory that in v. 1 there is the possibility of a hidden Hebrew phrase לֹא אָנ כִּי אֵל, whose redactor converted it into Aramaic לָא אִּיתַי אֵל. Thus, Torrey translated the second part of v. 1 as follows: “I am not a God, I am not a God that I should have power (יכל).” Forestell faithfully followed Torrey’s proposed reading of v. 1. Murphy later proposed quite similar emendations of the critical morphemes, reading v. 1 thus: “Sayings of Agur… Massaite: I am not God, I am not God that I should prevail.”

Scott, taking Torrey’s translation into account, offered a similar possibility for reading v. 1: “The words of Agur ben Yakeh of Massa. The man solemnly affirmed, ‘There is no God! There is no God,’ and I can [not know anything] (יך).” Scott’s translation was accepted by McKane, except for the very last lexeme we’ūkāl, which, for McKane, “strains impossibly” when read in a negative way, and so suggests reading the verb as is: “and I can (יך).” One decade later, reading “lo ’ito ’el – lo ’iti ’el,” Cox offered

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69 Murphy, Proverbs, 225; the same translation offered by Silvije Grubišić, Životne upute, Franjevačka Biblija (Tomislavgrad-Zagreb: Naša Ognjišta, KS, HBD, 2010) 858.
70 Scott, Proverbs, 175.
another translation of v. 1: “The words of Agur son of Jakeh, a solemn statement. The sayings of the man who has no god; I have no god, but I can do without (ה”),”\(^\text{72}\) Similar emendations of the word compounds with another final verbal choice, although with the same result, are provided by Lelièvre and Maillot: “Paroles de Agour, fils de Yaqèh de Massa. Proclamation de cet homme: El, il n’est pas ici. El, il n’est pas là. C’est fini! [וַיהוָה]” (“Words of Agur, son of Yaqeh from Massa. Proclamation of the man: El, he is not here. El, he is not there. It is over!”).\(^\text{73}\)

There are unique translations by Dahood and Lipiński that have not been generally accepted by scholars. Dahood, on the basis of the Ugaritic verb l’y (to prevail) and the Ugaritic gloss aliyn b ‘l (I, Baal, prevail), developed a new suggestion for the translation of the last part of v. 1: “I, El, prevail (or “I am strong, O El”) and I am able.”\(^\text{74}\) Lipiński, who in his article only sheds light on his investigation of the second part of v. 1, suggests that the first part seems to be entitled “Agur, Son of Jaqêh” and translates the rest of the verse as a pronouncement by a boastful father to his son: “Oracle de l’Athlète pour Iti’el (El-existe): Je suis fort puissant et je l’emporte!” (“Oracle of the [father] Athlete [by the name Gabbara] to [the son] Iti’el [El-exixt]: I am very powerful and I win! [וַיהוָה]”).\(^\text{75}\)

As can be seen from the translations presented, the morphemes in Prov 30:1 could be understood either as proper nouns (Syr, Tg; later Cartwright, Durell, Herder, Holdem, Umbreit, Muenscher, etc.) or as appellatives (LXX, Vg; later Coccejus, Michaelis, Ziegler, Mütinghe, Hitzig, Geiger, De Wette, Grätz, Bickell, Cheyne etc.).


\(^\text{74}\) Mitchell Dahood, _Proverbs and Northwest Semitic Philology_ (SPIB 113; Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1963) 57.

\(^\text{75}\) Edward Lipiński, “Peninna, Iti’el et l’athlète,” _VT_ 17 (1967) 68–75, here 75.
Depending on how v. 1 is reckoned, translators and scholars offer different interpretations of Prov 30:1. Thus, the LXX and Vg avoid the term “prophecy” but the noun “God” is present in their translations of v. 1. In addition, the Vg calls the author’s discourse visio. According to the Vg, words authorized by God can be used in teaching or preaching but are not necessarily inspired words from God as are prophecies. By contrast, the Syr and Tg did not hesitate to call the author’s words prophetical and attributed them to King Solomon, who was found worthy to receive God’s prophecy. Modern scholars disagree regarding the prophetical or doctrinal context in Prov 30:1.

Furthermore, with the LXX and Vg began a long scholarly discussion about וְאֻכָל, the last morpheme of v. 1. The LXX has the meaning of the corresponding negative statement (παύομαι [뿐만]), while the Vg has the affirmative statement (confortatus [عالم]). Regarding the final statement, the question is whether the content in v. 1 presents human defects or human virtue: defeat as claimed by Michaelis, Mühlau, Bickell and others, or triumph as claimed by Ewald, De Wette and Gemser. To resolve this problem, scholars have extensively investigated the preceding homonyms לְאִּיתִּיאל, לְאִּיתִּיאל.

The majority of scholars find the verb לאי in the MT form לְאִּיתִּיאל. The verb לאי “properly means ‘be unable’ or be in contrast to the verbs for ‘strengthening’ (cf. Job 4:2.5).” However, the use of the verb in the Bible is heterogeneous. In Ps 68:10, it is found in the Hiph’il perfect, which with wāw forms a temporal determinative clause with a physical meaning: “when your land is turned into desert…” Otherwise, the verb in the Hiph’il with the pronominal suffix as its object has the meaning of human physical fatigue (Job 16:7; Jer 12:5; Mic 6:3), while in the Hiph’il or Niph’al with a noun as its direct

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77 Cf. Marvine E. Tate, Psalms 51–100 (WBC 20; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000) 164 n. 10d.
object it has the meaning of spiritual fatigue (Isa 7:13; 16:12; 47:13). Finally, the verb in the Qal and Niph‘al in an infinitive phrase expresses the concern of human spiritual exhaustion (Gen 19:11; Exod 7:18; Prov 26:15; Isa 1:14; Jer 6:11; 9:4 [here the infinitive precedes the verb יכלה]; 15:6; 20:9). There is no instance in the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia (BHS) where the verb with its object expresses weariness. Nevertheless, the doubled verb in Prov 30:1 might signify the introspection of inner and outer human weariness. If so, the final verb יכלה can only mean human defeat as a consecutive conclusion (––the function of wāw) of the verse (contra Baumgartner and Sauer).

The human comparison with God proposed by Torrey also ends with a negative final resolution (Murphy, Scott, McKane). Calling into question the existence of God, the scriptural author voices extreme pessimism (Cox, Lelièvre and Maillot).

The aforementioned interpretations of Prov 30:1 must be respectfully taken into consideration, not only because of their diversities and similarities, but especially because of the efforts by renowned scholars to understand this key verse of Proverbs 30. The morphological doubts and alternatives of v. 1 will be extensively presented and explained in the second chapter. It is already clear that each vocable of the verse can be understood in multiple ways. The most crucial and critical words and morphological compounds still to be explained are יכלה, לאאתאלא, בריתהא, ימיות, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה, אֶנְרָה.

2. The Composition and Structure of Proverbs 30

No less discussion has been provoked by the structure of the entire Chapter 30. Differences arise between those scholars who ascribe all thirty-three verses to Agur and those who subscribe to the theory that Agur’s words do not go beyond v. 4 or v. 6. The scholars who support the former theory of verses could be categorized as Maximalists, while those who end Agur’s words with v. 4 could be categorized as Minimalists. Those scholars who closely follow the theory of the Minimalists but who also include vv. 5–6, known as Agur’s Prayer, among Agur’s words could be called Semi-Minimalists.

Does the first section, usually called Agur’s Sayings, embrace the entire Chapter 30 or does it not go beyond v. 4 or vv. 5–6? Some scholars extend the Semi-Minimalists’ theory by reckoning Agur’s words up to v. 9. Those who claim that Agur’s section also embraces vv. 7–9 would be called Moderates because they attribute vv. 7–9 of the prayer in the 1st-person singular to Agur but not beyond v. 9, where, after the reproach in the 2nd-person singular, the 3rd-person singular verbs express reproving intentions. Scholars who follow the LXX division, thinking that Proverbs 30 consists of two different sections (Prov 30:1–14 and Prov 30:15–33), where, in the first section, the words of the wise man include vv. 1–14, might be called the Dividers.81 Due to such scholarly disagreement, there is wide diversity of interpretation. Moreover, some scholars have offered possible variations regarding Proverbs 30. These exegetes will be presented as the Idiosyncratics.

81 The Septuagintal tradition follows the composition according to which the first part of the chapter (vv. 1–14) is attributed to a wise man, whereas the collection of proverbs (vv. 15–33) belongs to the so called Numerical Sayings.
2.1: “Agur’s Section” and the MT/LXX Alternatives

No other chapter of the Hebrew text in the entire Book of Proverbs in the MT has so many opening sections (8) as does Chapter 30. The MT of Proverbs 30 opens the first parashah petuhah in the very last verse of Proverbs 29 and concludes it with Prov 30:6. The following opening portions of the chapter are found in vv. 9, 14, 17, 20, 23 and 28. The parashah setumah is not marked in this section but earlier, in Prov 24:22, specifically between vv. 22 and 23, where the first fifteen MT verses of Proverbs 30 are found in the LXX.82 It is possible to speculate that in Prov 24:22, even before the Masoretic punctuation was inserted into the text, some sort of concluding section might have existed, which is why the Septuagint translators inserted Prov 30:1–14 after Chapter 24 in the LXX.83

The LXX division of Proverbs 30 is probably the major reason why later scholars divide the chapter into two independent sections: Prov 30:1–14 and Prov 30:15–33.84 De Lagarde explains the divergence between the LXX and MT by the fact that the MT was written in adjacent columns, which the Greek translator incorrectly read horizontally rather than vertically.85 Tov remarks that De Lagarde’s proposal might have been correct if the differences only occurred in Chapters 15, 16, 24, and 25. In fact, continues Tov, the LXX has many other omissions, additions, interpolations, “pluses and minuses (1:7;


83 It is obvious that the LXX treated Prov 24:23–34; 30:1–14; 30:15–33; 31:1–9 and 31:10–31 as self-contained proverbial unities. Grintz (משלי שלמה, 88 n. 3) claims that the LXX’s translators had deleted the headline “Proverbs of Solomon” at the beginning of Chapter 10, altered the headings at the beginning of Prov 30:1; 30:15; 31:1 and elaborated Prov 22:17 and 24:23.

84 Baumgartner, Étude critique, 240–42.


Where De Lagarde viewed the textual differences between the MT and LXX as due to translator error, Baumgartner focused on the possibility of the Ur-manuscripts that were primarily used by the translators of the LXX, arguing that disorder in the manuscripts could have created perplexing difficulties in the rendering of the Septuagint.87 Cheyne asserted that the LXX dislocation of Proverbs 30 and 31:1–9 “looks as if the translator had expunged all those peculiarities in the superscriptions which suggested a variety of authorship. The proper names in chapt. xxx and xxxi have been explained away and the heading in x. i, which limits the Solomonic authorship too much for the translator, has been actually omitted.”88

In a similar manner, Johann Cook, supported by Fox, Hamonville, and Nam-Hoon Tan, proposes the same Vorlage for the MT and LXX, with additional interpretation by the LXX translator to make the text clear and congruous.89 Fox, however, disagrees with Cook’s argument that the LXX “presents the earliest exegetical commentary on the Hebrew text.”90 Instead, Fox claims that the LXX “does introduce additional elements for exegetical purposes, but only a few are really tendentious.”91 Thus, redacting the primary text with remarkable omissions, additions, interpolations and minus-plus adaptations of the MT,

87 Baumgartner, Étude critique, 149.
88 Cheyne, Job and Solomon, 175. Cheyne’s conclusion is accepted by David-Marc D’Hamonville, Les Proverbes (La Bible d’Alexandrie 17; Paris: Cerf, 2000) 28.
90 Cook, The Septuagint, 35.
91 Fox, Proverbs 1–9, 361.
the translator (2nd century B.C.E.) reinterpreted Proverbs “for its own Greek context.” 92 Tov notes that the many differences in the Proverbs in the LXX can only suggest a different Vorlage for the Greek translation of Proverbs. Tov observes: “Furthermore, the type of parallelism of the verses (for example, Chapters 15, 16 or 24) in the arrangement of the MT does not make it a more coherent unit than that of the LXX.” 93 Skehan, instead, considers the LXX composition of Proverbs 30 to be original and exact, where the separation of Prov 30:1–6 as a part of the so-called “Solomon and Hezekiah collection” (Prov 25:2–31:31) from Prov 30:7–33 as a part of “Wise Men collection” (Prov 22:17–24:32) is correctly made. 94 Cook has a good argument contra Skehan in his analysis of Prov 30:32–33 in the MT, pointing out that Proverbs 30–31 go together and that Proverbs 31 is logically preceded by Proverbs 30. 95 Fox suggests that since “there are only two differently located blocks in the end of LXX-Prov, 30:1–14 (34 stichs) and 30:15–33 (45 stichs), the Septuagintal order may have resulted from their accidental displacement, in a way that recalls the dislocation of Sir 30:25–55–33:13a in the Greek.” 96

None of the aforementioned proposals is implausible. However, on a practical basis, it would be difficult for a translator to reorganize an already composed Hebrew text, simply because the scribe would have been translating the Hebrew text sentence by sentence and section by section, directly from the original. Moreover, the scribe would have required the personal courage, extraordinary technical skill (even today it would be difficult to shift one biblical section to another chapter) and a profound

93 Tov, The Greek, 426–27.
94 Skehan, Studies, 38–40.
95 Cook, The Septuagint, 295.
96 Fox, Proverbs 1–9, 364.
knowledge of the subject matter in order to make major changes in the text, especially to relocate a section from its original place and fit it into a new syntactical and structural ambient.\textsuperscript{97}

Accordingly, if the translator used the already sorted and composed Hebrew Book of Proverbs, it is much more likely that he simply followed the available Vorlage (Tov), translating it section by section, including or excluding some additional words or interpretations for unspecified reasons in an attempt to follow the original text literally.\textsuperscript{98} It is also possible to suggest that pagan and cultural Alexandria may have possessed an already composed manuscript of the Hebrew Proverbs as a part of historical world literature, which the Greek translators utilized in the LXX translation.

Evidence of the symbiosis of the biblical and extra-biblical wisdom literature is found in an Aramaic text in Demotic script called \textit{P. Amherst 63}, where the Egyptian poetic text of the liturgy of the New Year’s festival is addressed to an “Aramaic-speaking community in Upper Egypt … possibly at the beginning of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century B.C.E. Veneration of the Lord is represented by prayers in cols. XI–XII that contain Hebrew words and Israelite divine names (Adonai, 7 times, Yaho, once).”\textsuperscript{99} In this section of prayer are found several close parallels with Ps 20:2–6 that resemble a copy of the Hebrew Psalter translated into Aramaic and adapted into Egyptian Demotic script.\textsuperscript{100} It is possible to presume that the Jewish history and law in the Torah and the monotheistic prophetic literature in Nevi’im were not as interesting for the Alexandrian Greek pagan world as were the wisdom literature in the Ketuvim,


especially the collection of poetry in Psalms and the proverbial literature in Proverbs, which incorporate not only Jewish but the entire West Semitic wisdom literature tradition and even ancient Egyptian wisdom (cf. Prov 22:17–23:14 and Amenemope).\textsuperscript{101}

Thus, the Jewish Diaspora or Royal Library of Alexandria\textsuperscript{102} could have had a version of an already composed Hebrew Proverbs, which the Greek translator could have utilized for the LXX.\textsuperscript{103}

Otherwise, if the Greek translator did not use an already composed Hebrew Book of Proverbs, then it could be presumed that Hebrew manuscripts kept by the Jewish Diaspora had separate collections of Proverbs, especially those of Solomon (Prov 1:1–22:16) and Hezekiah (Proverbs 25–29). In that case, it would not be difficult to attribute the separate collections of Prov 22:17–24:32 and Proverbs 30–31 either to Solomon’s or to Hezekiah’s collection (see the conclusion of this dissertation). In addition, the composition of the MT Proverbs follows the same order, which suggests that a Hebrew redactor in Palestine simply incorporated the proverbial collections chronologically: 1) Solomon’s collection (Prov 1:1–22:16), 2) a separate collection attributed to Solomon (Prov 22:17–24:32), 3) Hezekiah’s collection (Proverbs 25–29) and 4) a separate collection of Proverbs 30–31. Thus, Proverbs 30–31, according to the MT redactor, are not from Solomon’s but rather from Hezekiah’s time. Instead, the LXX redactor saw the separate proverbial collections of Prov 22:17–24:32 and Proverbs 30–31 not as Hezekiah’s later collection but rather as part of an earlier one, i.e., Solomon’s collection and, adapting Prov 24:22, 30:1


A most interesting fact is that the hymn אֵשֶּת־חַיִּל or γυναίκα ἀνδρείαν (Prov 31:10–31), a Hebrew acrostic, is used by both redactors as the masterful final paragraph, which justifies the literal conclusion of the Book of Proverbs. Thus, the LXX redactor might have incorporated Prov 30:1–14 immediately after the literary intermission or later Masoretic break with the parashah setumah in 24:22, where, after the clear distinction between a righteous son with understanding and wisdom and an unrighteous son without understanding or wisdom (24:3–7, 15–16), the sage’s teaching in Prov 30:1–14 occurs. Understanding the subject of Prov 30:1–14 as a king’s ungodliness and repentence (see the conclusion of this dissertation), the Greek redactor, while adapting Prov 24:22, against the ungodliness of the king and against the king’s wrath toward the poor (LXX Prov 24:22b), added it to Chapter 24. After the first parashah petuhah in 24:23, the Greek redactor would have included Prov 24:23–34 as a coherent theme of social justice, as also found in Prov 30:15–33. For Prov 31:1–9, it seems that Cook rightly argues that 25:1–7 was placed before 31:1–9 because the king is the major theme of both passages.104 It is quite obvious that the Greek redactor, after the teaching concerning good and bad sons, incorporated Prov 30:1–14 as an example of the righteous lifestyle. This is why he changed Prov 30:1–4 from a negative to a very positive perspective.105

Unlike the LXX redactor, the MT redactor, having made minor changes in the text, simply added the independent Proverbs 30–31 to the end of the book. However, the question arises whether there was

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something in the text of Proverbs 30 that orthodox theologians could not easily accept and, thus, were forced to elaborate. This question will be explored at length in the dissertation.

2.2: From the Maximalists to the Idiosyncratics

In contrast to the curious LXX translation and its structure of Proverbs 30, the Syr closely follows the MT text and its structure, as does the Tg of Proverbs. In comparison with other biblical books in the Targumim, the Targum of Proverbs shows very limited elaborations, paraphrases or expansions of the MT\(^{106}\) and the Vg version does not have any sign of divisions in Proverbs 30. One of the early 6th-century Coptic fragments, following the LXX version, incorporates the MT Proverbs 30 and 31:1–9 into Chapter 24.\(^{107}\)

The following classification of scholars into Maximalists (attributing all 33 verses to Agur), Minimalists (only vv. 1–4 to Agur), Semi-Minimalists (vv. 1–6 belong to Agur), Moderates (vv. 1–9 are all Agur’s), Dividers (vv. 1–14 belong to one author), Idiosyncratics (Agur’s words and those he did not utter intermingle in Chapter 30) tracks the matrix of scholars diachronically and is not the definitive scholarly structural division of Proverbs 30. This classification reflects the fact that scholars often offer alternative structural arguments in addition to their main structural analysis of Proverbs 30. However, given the multitude of structural-exegetical interpretations, it is necessary to develop some sort of classification for those who share similarities in their explanations. The following classifications are helpful for grasping the main points made by the scholars who have worked on Proverbs 30.

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2.2.1: The Maximalists on Proverbs 30 (vv. 1–33)

The tendency of the earlier commentaries on Proverbs 30 is to keep the entire chapter as unified as possible. Although much more of the scholarly attention of the Maximalists focused on the first half of the chapter or vv. 1–9, where the theological interest of the ancient author is presented, their interest in interfusing all the verses with recognizable catchwords, styles or common ideas is remarkable.\(^\text{108}\) Ibn Ezra is one of the first who addressed the structure in Proverbs 30, considering the entire chapter as Agur’s speech.\(^\text{109}\) L. Lavater, a 16th-century scholar, acknowledging the complexity of Proverbs 30 and, bypassing a minute classification of the verses, found four major themes, again mostly only focusing on vv. 1–9 due to their theological content: *Primum ostendit, quanta sit caecitas hominu, praesertium in rebus divinis* (“The first indicates how great is the blindness of man, especially in divine things”); *deinde, a Deo petendam esse sapientia ostendit* (“then, the second shows that God should be asked for wisdom”); *tertio loco, patefactam esse verbo Domini* (“third, the word of God has been revealed”); *quarto, verbo Dei nihil addendum, nihil detrahendum esse* (“fourth, to the word of God nothing should be added and nothing taken away”).\(^\text{110}\)

Melanchthon, another 16th-century scholar, dividing the entire Book of Proverbs into twenty major sections, placed Chapters 1–10 and 29–31 under the common title of *Ad intelligenda & c.* (Chapters 1–9) and *Princeps amans mendacia, habet omnes ministros impios* [Chapters 29–31] (“The governor who loves lies has all wicked servants”). Accordingly, in the last three chapters, Melanchthon did not see either Agur or Lemuel, but, rather, an unknown monarch, who, similar to Greek Homeric characters,


identifies three mutual characterizations in Proverbs 30, where the first ten verses are embraced by the
generic noun Princeps..., whereas v. 11 opens a new section called Hoc genus, patri conuiciun facit, nec
benedicit matri (“The generation who makes trouble for the father and does not bless the mother”), which
continues with the same idea up to v. 15a, where a new section, i.e., vv. 15b–18 is opened, under the title
Triam perturbant terra (“Three perturbations of the land”). Furthermore, vv. 18–20 are called Quatour
sunt minuta (“Four things are small”), while the rest of the verses (21–33) are simply summarized under
one subtitle, Si fatue egisti elatus superbia, manum opponito ori tuo (“If you consider yourself arrogant,
shut your mouth”). A similar division is found in the Vg manuscript 24862 (Fonds Français), where the
first three verses of Proverbs 30 are part of Prov 29:27. Here, besides the first portion, 29:27–30:3, there
are nine other divisions, i.e., vv. 4–7; 8; 9; 10–14; 15–17; 18–20; 21–25; 26–29 and 29–33.

A 17th-century scholar, Piscator (Fisher), although keeping Proverbs 30 together structurally,
based his exposition solely on the first half of the chapter. According to him, Agur in vv. 1–6 presents an
excerpt of prophecy about sapientiam caelestium hominibus occultum esse (“celestial wisdom that is kept
secret from humans”), whereas vv. 7–9 continues with duo quaedam a Deo petit (“he desires two certain
things from God”) and concludes with v. 10 as dehortatur a detractione (“he dissuades from
detraction”).

The majority of 18th and 19th-century scholars (Kennicott, De Rossi, De Wette, Umbreit, Lawson,
Bertheau, Bridges, Conant, Delitzsch, Muenscher and Frankenberg) followed the Maximalists’ approach
to Proverbs 30. Thus, Kennicott and De Rossi attributed all thirty-three verses to Agur, noting that the

111 Philip Melanchthon, Explicatio Proverborum Salomonis: In Schola Wittembergensi recens dicta
(Frankfurt: P. Brubachos, 1550) 211–20. Unlike Melanchthon, Stuart (Commentary, 65) claims that “there is no
other book in all the Septuagint which has so few Hellenisms as the Book of Proverbs.”
112 LeCompte, 51–60.
113 Johann Piscator (Fisher), Proverbia, Commentariorum in Omnes Libros Veteris Testamenti (Hesse:
Academia Nassauensis, 1644) 3:399.
words are directed as instruction to his disciples about covetous and avaricious people. Although he assigns the entire chapter to Agur, De Wette argues that only vv. 1–4 might be directed to Ithiel. Otherwise, he presents vv. 10, 15, 16 and 17 as isolated single proverbs, whereas vv. 5–6, 7–9, 11–14, 18–19, 20–21, 22–23, 24–28, 29–31 and 32–33 are redactorial or additional work. Lawson, also attributing all thirty-three verses to Agur, divides the chapter into “Agur’s teaching” (vv. 1–5), “Agur’s prayer” (vv. 6–9), and 3) “Agur’s method of classifying his observations into a certain number of particulars” (vv. 10–33). Akin to Lawson, Umbreit assigns the entire chapter to a wise Agur, who expresses his knowledge through enigmas. According to Umbreit, the composition of the chapter creates the following thematic sections: 1–4, 5–8, 9–10, 11–15, 16–19, 20, 21, 22–24, 25–26, 27–28, 29, 31, 32, and 33. Following a similar idea of distinct themes, Bertheau divided the chapter into eleven sections (1–6, 7–9, 10, 11–14, 15f, 17, 18–20, 21–23, 24–28, 29–31, 32f.), considering the first six verses to be Agur’s vain search for God and “Erkenntnis Gottes zu schreiben” (“knowledge of God to describe”). According to Bertheau, the second section, vv. 7–9, contains the two petitions that Agur asks of God. After the isolated v. 10, the set of subjects in vv. 11–14 are presented, where, according to Bertheau “alle diese sind Jahve ein Greuel” (“all of these are an abomination to God”). The enigma of the two daughters comprises v. 15, while v. 16 “bildet ein in sich geschlossenes Ganze” (“forms a self-contained complete set”) and v. 17, “der allein für sich einen abgeschlossene Sinn gibt, selbständig dasteht” (“stands independently, giving a complete idea by itself”). Three wondrous things are hidden in the section of vv. 18–20. In vv. 21–23, the emphasis is placed on the number four. Likewise, in the numerical vv. 24–28, a

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114 Benjamin Kennicott and Giovanni B. De Rossi, Notes of Critical Commentary on the Book of Psalms and Proverbs: Intended to Correct the Grammatical Errors of the Text from the Collations of the MSS by Dr. Kennicott on the Psalms and by Him and De Rossi on the Proverbs; Restore and Elucidate Some Corrupt and Obscure Passages, by Comparing the MSS with the Antient Versions, the Parallel Places of Scripture, the Proposed Emendations of Many Able Critics and Submitting Some Further Conjectural Reading to the Judgment of the Learned (ed. H. Dimock; Gloucester: R. Raikers, 1791) 484–90.

115 De Wette, Die Sprüche, 392–97.


117 Umbreit, Philologisch-kritischer, 392–408.
range of simple but very clever beings are presented. “Drei schön einherschreiten und vier schön einhergehen” (“three who march prettily and four who accompany prettily”) are mentioned in vv. 29–31, while v. 32 consists of the thesis and antithesis of the disputes and debates that are concluded with violence and, finally, v. 33 contains “Hader und Streit, die das Ziel der Rede” (“discord and strife, which are the object of the speech”).

C. Bridges, too, finds Agur’s teachings throughout Proverbs 30. According to him, Agur’s philosophical comprehension is replaced by spiritual understanding (1–4, 5 and 6–9). Moreover, in an attitude of profound contemplation, Agur reaches a high level of understanding in which he establishes a distinction between the interacting components of human lust (11–14, 15–16 and 17) on the one hand and a “kingdom of nature full of wonders and wonders full of instruction (18–20, 21–23, 24–28 and 29–33)” on the other hand. In a similar way, it seems that Stuart attributes all thirty-three verses to the sage Agur. However, while the first ten verses include Agur’s words, vv. 11–33 are divided by Stuart into four classes presenting different negative human characteristics. In this way, vv. 11–20 are linked together through the imagery of eating, which distinguishes a first class consisting of evil and insatiable people. The second class consists of scandalous people (vv. 21–23), the third unfathomable people (vv. 24–28), and the fourth proud people (vv. 29–31). The last two verses of the chapter, according to Stuart, are a protasis, “without any apodosis expressed to either of them.”

T. J. Conant divided Proverbs 30 into three major parts: “an oracle of Agur” (vv. 1–6), “prayer of Agur” (vv. 7–9) and “Agur’s brief observation about humanity” (vv. 10–33). According to Conant, the combined collections are mostly life lessons. Thus, vv. 11–14 present four different human characters, and vv. 15 and 16 illustrate the insatiable demands of appetites and passion. The self-standing v. 17 deals

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118 Bertheau, *Die Sprüche*, 168–76.
with filial impiety, whereas vv. 18–20 are typical of the peculiar style of Oriental teaching. Furthermore, according to Conant, vv. 21–23 provide examples of four types of humanity, and vv. 24–28 present a lesson in wisdom regarding worldly affairs and God’s provident care for the least of his creatures. Again, vv. 29–31 are examples of four graceful and majestic types of movement, and the final vv. 32 and 33 are lessons in self-restraint and forbearance.\textsuperscript{121}

F. Delitzsch attributes all thirty-three verses to Agur, separating Agur’s confession (vv. 1–4) and advice (vv. 5–6) from the numerical proverbs (7–33) “under the ‘Words’ of Agur, who delighted in this form of proverb.”\textsuperscript{122} Delitzsch deals with the chapter’s \textit{numeralia} according to a peculiar old German priamel model that emphasizes a \textit{leading conclusion}, which is developed when, after “a series of antecedents or subjects, a briefly-expressed consequent is introduced as the epigrammatic point applicable to all these antecedents together.”\textsuperscript{123} Thus, the section comprised of vv. 7–31 belongs to the proverbs following the priamel with the common animal figures mentioned in vv. 7–9, 10, 11–14, 15–16 and v. 17. After the “number 2”\textsuperscript{124} in v. 7 and v. 15, v. 18 follows the “number 3” in 18–20, while vv. 21–23 combine the “numbers 3 and 4” starting with the “number 4” in vv. 24–29a. The last priamel in vv. 29b–31 returns to the combination of the “number 3 and 4.”\textsuperscript{125}

J. Muenscher does not find any unifying content in Proverbs 30 but relies on the segue of familiar words throughout the entire chapter. He assumes that all thirty-three verses of Proverbs 30 pertain to the “sentences of Agur, the son of Jakeh.”\textsuperscript{126}

\textsuperscript{121} Thomas J. Conant, \textit{The Book of Proverbs} (New York: Sheldo & Co., 1872) 79–84.
\textsuperscript{122} Delitzsch, \textit{Commentary}, 283.
\textsuperscript{123} Ibid., 284, n. 1.
\textsuperscript{124} Delitzsch (\textit{Commentary}, 281) calls cipher: “the sum of numerical proverb which is to be brought forth separately.”
\textsuperscript{125} Ibid., 281, 261–307.
\textsuperscript{126} Muenscher, \textit{The Book of Proverbs}, 250–259.
W. Frankenberg notes that the heading of the introduction and invocation of God occur in vv. 1–3, after which follows a set of rhetorical questions. The sphere of the divine, which is spread throughout vv. 5–6, is closed to humans, although invisible things are pointed out to people through wisdom from above, and the prayer of vv. 7–9 expresses finding God. According to Frankenberg, the four verses 11–14 are regularly constructed and thematically correlated to the previous verses, and vv. 15–16 are a further Nachbild of vv. 11–14. The Wunderdinge in vv. 18–19 and 21–23 are the unusual things that conflict with established human conventions, so that the earth trembles when they occur. Frankenberg notes that the author in vv. 24–28 compiles a list of small but wise animals in their nature and action. A similar approach continues in the following vv. 29–31. Wanton and reckless speech generates controversy, which is mentioned in v. 32 and well exemplified in v. 33.127

Some 20th-century scholars (Knabenbauer, Sauer, Myers, Cohen, Kitchen and Garrett) accept the one author and one structure theory for Proverbs 30. Thus, Knabenbauer, following Jerome’s translation, assumes that Chapter 30 presents a unique structure that addresses the discrepancies between human knowledge and transcendental mysteries (vv. 1–6 and 7–9); good and evil (vv. 10–14 and 15–20); and conventional and unconventional orders in the world (vv. 21–28 and 29–33).128

G. Sauer organizes the structure of Proverbs 30 around thirteen segments. After the title in v. 1a, Agur opens his first segment in vv. 1b–4 with concluding thoughts in vv. 5–6. In vv. 7–9, Agur begins the numerical series in vv. 15–16, 18–19, 21–23, 24–28 and 29–31 with some extensions in v. 10, 17 and 20, and a concluding segment in vv. 32–33.129

127 Frankenberg, Sprüche, 159–65.
128 Knabenbauer, Commentarius, 229–38.
129 Sauer, Sprüche, 99–112.
I. Myers, by disconnecting the first verse from the rest of the chapter as a title, attributes all the remaining thirty-two verses to Agur. Myers then divides the chapter into ten subsections: “the unsearchableness of God” (vv. 2–4), “the Word of God” (vv. 5–6), “the golden mean” (vv. 7–10), “an evil generation” (vv. 11–14), “insatiable” (vv. 15–17), “things unknowable” (vv. 18–20), “intolerable” (vv. 21–23), “little and wise” (vv. 24–28), “stately in going” (vv. 29–31) and “restraining of wrath” (vv. 32–33).  

A. Cohen, while noting some slight differences in style, language and content, attributes the entire Chapter 30 to Agur, pointing out as well the employment of the quatrains as a “citation of four examples to illustrate an idea.” Thus, the very first verse, according to Cohen, is a superscription, whereas vv. 2–4 develop Agur’s prologue, vv. 5–6 his exhortation to rely on revelation, while the subsequent vv. 7–9 present Agur’s prayer. Verse 10 begins a new section of Agur’s aphorisms, which are divided into nine sections: “slander not a slave” (v. 10), “four wicked types” (vv. 11–14), “the insatiable” (vv. 15–16), “filial impiety punished” (v. 17), “the incomprehensible” (vv. 18–20), “the intolerable” (vv. 21–23), “four creatures small but wise” (vv. 24–28), “four stately beings” (vv. 29–31) and “exercise restraint” (vv. 32–33). Similar to Cohen’s structure of Proverbs 30 is Plaut’s view on the entire chapter. Plaut distinguishes “Agur’s words” (v. 1), “on God and Man” (vv. 2–7), “on slander” (v. 10) and “on anger and self-control” (vv. 32–33). In addition, Plaut finds Agur’s personal prayer in vv. 7–9, a special view of “Agur’s time” in vv. 11–14 and “riddles of life” in vv. 15–31.

H. Schneider attributes all thirty-three verses to Agur, who, after an experience of human incapacity (v. 1) starts explaining human limitation and divine unreachability to foreign, non Israelite

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130 Myers, The Proverbs, 137–41.
teachers (vv. 2–4). The reference to Ps. 18:31 focuses on a theological explanation in vv. 5–6. A prayer that may invoke Job 21:14–15 and Isa 8:21 is presented in vv. 7–9. Verse 10 is associated with the following “aphorisms” in vv. 11–14, 15, 16 and the “recalcitrant son” in v. 17. Again, the wondrous but inhuman “ways” found in vv. 18–20 recall other scriptural texts, such as 1 Sam 17:44; 1 Chr 14:11; Job 39:27; Gen 3:1.14; Wis 14:3; and Ps 139:13. The human social order can be disturbed by the resentments expressed in vv. 21–23. Verses 24–28 allude to Prov 6:6–8; Ps 104:18; and Joel 2:5–8. The sin in vv. 29–31 is unclear, but the message seems to be caution in speaking and reasoning. A similar approach to Agur’s collection as comprising all thirty-three verses is also espoused by Šarić.

K. Kitchen, dividing Proverbs into two segments (Proverbs of Solomon 1–24 and Proverbs with titles 25:1 [2–29]; 30:1 [2–33]; 31:1 [2–9+10–31]), argues that Proverbs 30 derives from an unknown person, Agur. Agur was the one who compiled the “brief organic paragraphs of from two to five verses interrupted by atomistic units.”

In the teachings of Agur, Garrett emphasizes the “main body” in vv. 7–33. After the title (v. 1a) and acknowledgment of “the limits of human understanding” (vv. 1b–6), Agur proceeds with ten arguments according to the following themes: “a prayer of humility” (vv. 7–9), “respect for the menial worker” (v. 10), “the lowest forms of life” (vv. 11–14), “two sayings on insatiable things” (vv. 15–16), “the fate of the parent-hater” (v. 17), “a riddle and a clue” (vv. 18–20), “unbearable people” (vv. 21–23), “learn from the animals” (vv. 24–28), “royal animals” (vv. 29–31), and “troublemakers beware” (vv. 32–33).

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133 Schneider, Sprüche, 158–64.
136 Garrett, Proverbs, 235.
Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez find literal continuity in vv. 1–6, while the repetition of the root כזב in vv. 7–9 links the verses with the preceding passage. The verb קלל in v. 10 and v. 11 links these verses and opens a content connection between vv. 1–10 and 11–33. In a similar manner, the word עין in v. 17 stands in relation to vv. 11–43 as well as with the chapter’s verses marked by the numerical device of three and four. According to Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, an ancient redactor elaborated the verses by compiling them into single chapter.137

Finally, at the beginning of the 21st century, Waltke divided Agur’s wisdom into two titles as Agur’s introduction (vv. 1–9), in which his autobiographical confession occurs in the superscription of v. 1 and the confession, while vv. 2–6 reflect his inspired sayings and his two petitions stand in vv. 7–9. The main body of Agur’s seven numerical proverbs are a single-line saying about overturning the social order in v. 10, three verse-initial untitled sayings describing greed in vv. 11–16, a single-line saying describes overturning the social order in v. 17, four titled sayings that describe breaking boundaries in vv. 18–31, followed by the conclusion with “a warning not to upset the divine order” in vv. 32–33.138

The structure of Proverbs 30 proposed by Steinmann comprises the superscription to Agur’s proverbs (v. 1a), Agur’s prayers and advice (vv. 1b–10) and Agur’s list of proverbs (vv. 11–33); here, the basis of Agur’s meditation includes the first prayer (vv. 1–3), first address (v. 4), second address (vv. 5–6), the second prayer (vv. 7–9) and the third address (v. 10). The “cohesive section that explores the three main topics” of Agur’s saying in vv. 10–33 includes family, government and foolishness.139

The general approach of the Maximalists to Proverbs 30 is coherent. Scholars try to connect or reconnect all thirty-three verses of the chapter into a cohesive structure in which the ancient author expresses his teaching, prayer and brief observations on various natural and social transactions.

137 Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 602–11.
139 Steinmann, Proverbs, 585–612, esp. 605–608.
The Minimalists’ intention is to discover Agur’s exclusive and original words. Therefore, they have eliminated every uncertain conjunction, thereby reducing Agur’s argument to vv. 1–4 only. Some Minimalist scholars extend Agur’s theme up to vv. 5–6 and are called Semi-Minimalists here. The earliest representatives of those who limit Agur’s teaching to vv. 1–4 are the 19th-century scholars Cheyne, Muehlau, Miller and Toy. Cheyne argued that only the first four verses are part of Agur’s argument and that v. 5 shows the answer to Agur’s dilemma.\(^{140}\)

Although Muehlau tries to take the first fourteen verses as Agur’s, he divides vv. 1–14 into six subsections, separating vv. 4–5 from 1–4. Furthermore, he isolates vv. 9 and 10 from 7–8, while grouping vv. 11–14 together. With his view of the chapter’s structure, Muehlau comes closest to Cheyne’s opinion on its composition, i.e., Agur’s original words include only vv. 1–4, the additional elaboration of vv. 5–6 and 7–14 being synchronized with the original vv. 1–4.\(^{141}\)

J. Miller is convinced that the words of “I-Fear” (יָאַר) or “the Speech of the strong man” do not go beyond v. 4, while the so-called Agur’s Prayer in vv. 5–6 does not have anything in common with the preceding content of vv. 1–4. In his view, it is Solomon who made interpolations within the extant chapter’s thirty-three verses; from the character of human nature, which can reach deification (vv. 1–4), through God’s word (vv. 5–6) and the golden mean (vv. 7–10) and defilement through sin (vv. 11–14), to the insatiable (vv. 15–17), insidious (vv. 18–20) and intolerable (vv. 21–23). To rid oneself of these


tendencies, an individual must be made wise from above (vv. 24–28), but also by assiduous care and constant practice (vv. 29–33).\textsuperscript{142}

C. Toy is also of the opinion that Agur’s dictum does not go beyond v. 4, arguing that Prov 30:5–6 “may have been inserted by the editor to relieve the negative tone of Prov 30:2–4, but hardly to refute the assertion of the latter.”\textsuperscript{143}

The 20\textsuperscript{th}-century scholars Scott, Lipiński, McKane, Meinhold and Perdue likewise assert the presence of redactorial words added to Prov 30:1–4 in vv. 5–6 and 7–9. Thus Scott, in his presentation of the structure of Proverbs 30, confronts the Moderates because, while he recognizes the later stylistic coherence of vv. 1–9, he attributes only vv. 1–4 to Agur’s authorship, finding a dialogue between the impious (vv. 1–4) and the pious (vv. 5–6 and 7–9).\textsuperscript{144} A similar conception was proposed by Lipiński, who only worked on the first four verses, which he regards as the main subject of the pericope.\textsuperscript{145}

McKane, unlike Scott, argues that “vv. 1–9 is not formally a dialogue and vv. 5ff. are to be regarded as a subsequent corrective comment whose intention is not so much to disavow vv. 1–4, as to put the matter in a proper perspective.” According to McKane, there is no original literary unity between vv. 1–4 and 5–6. He points out that “vv. 7–9 are concerned with quite different matters and are probably attached to v. 6 only because (the verb) kzb, which occurs in v. 6, is also present in v. 8.”\textsuperscript{146}

Vis-à-vis the first part of Proverbs 30, Meinhold identifies a redactorial macrostructure concerning \textit{Gott-Mensch} (God-man, vv.1–9) and \textit{Mensch-Mitmensch} (Man-fellowman, vv.10–14) with an

\textsuperscript{142} Miller, \textit{A Commentary}, 509–11, 512–25.
\textsuperscript{143} Toy, \textit{Commentary}, 523.
\textsuperscript{144} Scott, \textit{Proverbs}, 176.
\textsuperscript{145} Lipiński, “Peninna,” 72.
\textsuperscript{146} McKane, \textit{Proverbs}, 643.
Erweiterung (amplification, vv. 10–14), while the actual words of Agur are only contained in vv. 1–4d.\textsuperscript{147} Perdue also holds that Agur’s original words do not go beyond v. 4. According to Perdue, a later redactor elaborated vv. 1–4 in vv. 21–23, citing the same human limitations. In addition, for Perdue Agur’s section can be extended throughout Chapter 30 because “the major theme of this collection is the arrogance that causes one to reject divine sovereignty and to overturn the social order” (vv. 1b–4, 13, 17, 21–23, 29–31 and 32–33).\textsuperscript{148}

The Minimalists all agree that Agur’s words or Agur’s monologue includes only the first four verses, which highlight the failure of the limited human intellect and spirit to reach the wisdom and reality of divine sovereignty (cf. Meinhold, p. 495).

2.2.3: The Semi-Minimalists on Proverbs 30 (vv. 1–6) and “Numerical” Definition

The Semi-Minimalists support the thesis that Agur’s section of vv 1–4 also includes Agur’s personal prayer against arrogance, misery and wickedness in vv. 5–6. Scholars who support this thesis generally designate vv. 7–9 as part of the so-called numerical proverbs found in vv. 15–30.

Issues related to the numerical aspects of vv. 15–30 have necessarily been focal points of many interpreters’ research. These issues will be explored more thoroughly in the next chapters of this study. For the time being, it is important to keep in mind that there is no strict pattern regarding the numerical proverbs (Lat. numeralia, Ger. Zahlsprüche), due to their original oral manner of delivery that was accompanied by gesticulation. Thus, the long period of collecting the proverbs, as well as their later setting and redactions, created different types of so-called numerical proverbs that in the Old Testament represent some kind of formal speech.\textsuperscript{149} Therefore, the “two things” in Prov 30:7 (cf. Job 13:20–22)

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Meinhold, Sprüche, 495.
\item Perdue, Wisdom, 68–72.
\item Cf. Sauer, Sprüche, 88; Clines, Job 1–20, 316.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
already invoke the numerical counting that was accompanied by gestures.\textsuperscript{150} Likewise, the four mentions of 
דוֹר—“generation,” “mentality,” “kind” in Prov 30:11–14, as well as the four preceding interrogative
pronouns מִי in Prov 30:4, imply certain a gesture, like modern hypsographic highlighting in writing.\textsuperscript{151}

The same rhetorical technique in Prov 30:15–31 (cf. Amos 1:3ff) with the widely adapted formula $x//x+1$
(3+4 instances), is not the presentation of instances of opposites but instead a literary device to facilitate
spontaneous memorization (cf. Job 13:20–21).\textsuperscript{152} The pattern $x//x+1$ in Prov 30:15ff will be explored in
the next chapter.\textsuperscript{153} For the time being, we note Delitsch’s conceptual definition of the numerical
proverbs numeralia as “a brief discourse, having a didactic end complete in itself, which by means of
numerals gives prominence to that which it seeks to bring forward.”\textsuperscript{154}

Keil, Bunsen, Müntinghe, Holden, Lange and Zöckler represent 19\textsuperscript{th}-century scholars who
extended the Minimalist section of Agur up to v. 6. Keil and Bunsen, however, claim that only the first six
verses make up one unit called The Sayings of Agur.\textsuperscript{155} Müntinghe’s division tries to hold the verses of
Chapter 30 together. In upholding the Maximalists’ view of Proverbs 30, his delimitation of the Agur
section apparently does not go beyond v. 6. According to Müntinghe, the first section of Chapter 30 is
composed of “drei kleinen Gedichten” (“three short poems”). The first poem concludes with v. 6, whereas
the second ends with v. 9 and the third with v. 14. Besides the numerical sayings 15–19, 21–23, 24–26
and 27–29, vv. 10, 32 and 33, according to Müntinghe, are the work of additional redactors.\textsuperscript{156}

\textsuperscript{150} Sauer (Sprüche, 101) also introduces the number three in Prov 30:7 and reads “zwei Dinge… drei
(Dinge)...”
\textsuperscript{151} Sauer (op. cit., 103) inserts an entire sentence in Prov 30:11: “Drei Dinge sind es, die Jahwe haßt, und
vier sind ihm ein Greuel” (“there are three things which the Lord hates and four are an abomination to him”).
\textsuperscript{152} It is obviously easier to remember 3 + 4 instances, than 7 instances or even the 13 in Prov 6:16–19.
\textsuperscript{153} See Chapter Two of this dissertation on Prov 30:15a.
\textsuperscript{154} Delitzsch, Commentary, 281.
\textsuperscript{155} F. Keil, Sprüche, 416; Bunsen, Vollständiges, 198.
\textsuperscript{156} Müntinghe, Sprüche, xv.
Similarly to Holden, Lange attributes the first six verses of Proverbs 30 to Agur and calls the other twenty-seven verses “various pithy numerical apothegms.”\textsuperscript{157} In a similar manner, Zöckler divides the entire chapter into two sections. The first section (Prov 30:1–6) is Agur’s and called “Introduction: from the word of God as the source of every wisdom,” whereas the second section comprises “different numerical proverbs.”\textsuperscript{158}

Following a similar approach, the 20\textsuperscript{th}-century scholars Martin, Hunter, Whybray, Grubišić, Scherer, Skehan, Forestell and Murphy extend Agur’s section to include vv. 1–6. Thus, Martin prolongs Agur’s monologue up to v. 6, arguing that in vv. 1–6 there is “one speaker who indicates the progress of his thought from a despairing agnosticism to a definite trust in the Divine being.”\textsuperscript{159}

While Hunter relies heavily on Miller’s maximalist structure, it seems that for him vv. 1–6 are Agur’s own, whereas vv. 7–8 are directed to God by another pious figure, although God is not directly mentioned until the end of the prayer.\textsuperscript{160}

Based on the thesis that the numerical proverb as a “literary device is not an exclusively Hebrew idiom, and it is not confined to the wisdom literature,” Whybray thinks that Agur’s words do not go beyond v. 6, even suggesting that vv. 5–6 originally might not have been part of the same composition as


\textsuperscript{158} Zöckler, \textit{Sprüche}, 205–6.

\textsuperscript{159} Martin, \textit{Proverbs}, 190.

\textsuperscript{160} Hunter’s division of Proverbs 30:10–33 (\textit{Book of Proverbs}, 463–69) is similar to Miller’s composition. According to Hunter, four arrogant scandalous generations are mentioned in vv. 11–14, while the proverbs of “three-four things” (vv. 15b–16, 18–19, 21–23, 24–28, 29–31) begin toward the close of v. 15. The independent vv. 17 and 20 show some kind of “connexion with the preceding,” and the final vv. 32 and 33 give practical applications.
Furthermore, Whybray also holds that vv. 7–9 and 11–14 should be included in the larger section of the numerical proverbs (similarly to Grubišić and Scherer).162

Forestell enlarges Agur’s monologue, arguing that only the first poem (vv. 1–6) “needs to be attributed to Agur, although the modest detachment of the other two (vv. 7–9 and 11–14) suggests the same author.”163 In a similar manner, Skehan and later Murphy hold that vv. 1–4 are Agur’s, while vv. 5–6 could be a reply to “Agur’s statement of ignorance,” whereas the first person singular in vv. 7–9 could invoke Agur’s pronouncement.164

A thematic and structural segue existing between vv. 1–4 and 5–6 is identified by the Semi-Minimalists, who find the first segment of Agur’s argument formed by the categorical questions in vv. 1–4, where the second segment of Agur’s argument in vv. 5–6 is elaborated by the theological answer and reference to religious practice.

2.2.4: The Dividers on Proverbs 30 (vv. 1–14)

The Dividers follow the old LXX division of Proverbs 30, which, for unknown reasons, does not evidence a numerical structure in its vv. 11–14.165 The LXX has also had a strong impact on the Targumic interpretation as well as modern scholars such as Loewenstein, French and Skinner, Ewald and Wildeboer, who represent the 19th-century Dividers in their approach to the Chapter.

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162 Whybray, Proverbs, 92; Grubišić, Životne upute, 858; Andreas Scherer, Das weise Wort, 19.
164 Murphy, The Tree of Life, 25–26; Skehan, Studies, 42–43.
165 Strömberg Krantz (“A Man,” 553 n.14) correctly suggests that the LXX “does not offer convincing evidence” for the structure of Proverbs 30 because “collections of Proverbs often include material of different origin and character.”
Loewenstein, following the Targumic arrangement of the Chapter, separates Proverbs 30 into two units, the first being Agur’s (vv. 1–14), where the entire first verse is regarded as a title followed by three segments: vv. 2–6, 7–9 and 11–14. The isolated v. 10 constitutes a thematic connection between the segments in vv. 7–9 and 11–14.  

French and Skinner take the entire first verse of Proverbs 30 as a title, which encompasses vv. 2–6 as a confession by Agur, whereas vv. 7–9 are understood as Agur’s personal prayer. Furthermore, they isolate v. 10 as self-standing and divide v. 15 into two parts (15a as an independent clause, with 15b as a part of v. 16) in order to make vv. 11–15a a coherent section against evil people.  

In the very first part of Chapter 30, Ewald finds a dialogue between הַגֶּבֶּר, the proud man who is mocking believers in vv. 2–4, and the pious man in v. 5–9, who represents the religious congregation that is opposed to the impious and wicked people presented in v. 11–14.  

Wildeboer maintains that the first part of the chapter (vv. 1–14) is a statement of the indispensability of divine revelation through God’s word as found in the Law and Prophets. Agur experienced disappointment in human capabilities (vv. 2–4), and recognizes a sinful generation who lacks wisdom (vv. 7–9, 10 and 11–14). However, all these negative aspects do not bring Agur to disbelief. Rather, the opposite is true. Agur clings to the revelation of God in the Scripture.  

Twentieth century scholars, such as Oesterley, Gemser, Fritsch and Schloerb (based on the translations of the KJV and RSV), Ringgren and Zimmerli, Barucq, Pié y Ninot, Plöger, Kaiser, van der

166 Lipmann H. Loewenstein, *Die Proverbien Salomos: Mit Benutzung älterer und neuerer Manuskripte* (Frankfurt am Main: Siegmund Schmerber, 1838) 278–82.  
Ploeg, Lelièvre and Maillot, Sović and Gilbert,\textsuperscript{170} have accepted and developed the theory of the earlier *Dividers*. Mostly on the basis of the LXX division, Oesterley is convinced that Chapter 30 consists of at least two different sources. The first part, Agur’s, comprises four sections: “title and introduction” (vv. 1–4), “exhortation” (vv. 5–6), “prayer” (vv. 7–9) and “miscellaneous sayings” (vv. 10–14). Oesterly argues that “the variety of subject-matter in these verses (sections) suggests the possibility that they may have been gathered from different sources.”\textsuperscript{171}

Gemser doubts that the entire chapter can be seen as Agur’s words and adopts the well-established division of Prov 30:1–14 and 15–33. The first section proceeds through “confession and question” (vv. 2–5), “truth and lies” (vv. 5–6), “falsehood and lies” (v. 8) and “denial and slander” (vv. 9–10). The common idea of arrogance is also present in vv. 1–9 and 11–14.\textsuperscript{172} Furthermore, Fritsch and Schloerb (based on translations of KJ and RSV) identify Agur as one who acknowledges his ignorance before God (vv. 1–4) and who is given reassurance in vv. 5–6. Even though Fritsch and Schoerb separate vv. 15–33 under the title *Numerical Sayings*, they still maintain that the numerical section in Proverbs 30 begins with v. 7.\textsuperscript{173}

Ringgren and Zimmerli also divide the chapter into two parts: 30:1–14 and 30:15–33. According to them, the first part places relation on God’s unlimited dimension vis-à-vis the limited human and material dimension (vv. 1–2), humanity’s connection with God only by divine revelation (v. 4), an example of prayer (vv. 7–9), an isolated proverb (v. 10) and the “Geschlecht der Gottlosen” (“the wicked

\textsuperscript{170} Although in a private discussion with the author Dr. Gilbert averred that Agur’s part does not go beyond v. 9.

\textsuperscript{171} Oesterley, *Proverbs*, 267, 270.

\textsuperscript{172} Gemser, *Sprüche*, 79–81.

generation,” vv. 11–14). In a similar manner, Barucq divides the chapter into the two usual parts: vv. 1–14 and 15–33. Considering v. 1 as a sapiential introduction, Barucq recognizes a prevailing attitude of humiliation and justification in vv. 2–3. After a series of questions (v. 4), a sage offers a theological lecture in vv. 5–6 (similar to Job’s), while vv. 7–9 reflect the Solomonic approach found in 1 Kgs 3:8. Although vv. 10 and 11–14 appear to be self-standing, in their vocabulary they are closer to the preceding vv. 1–9 than to the following vv. 15–33. Similar to Barucq’s approach is that of Pié y Ninot, who also divides the chapter into two sections (p. 47), although subsequently (p. 83) unifying Proverbs 30 as Agur’s exposition before a boastful man (v. 1–4) and notes “se describe, en términos de una teofanía, la promesa y la intervención de Yahvéh para salvar, como signo de su lealtad [vv. 5–31]” (it describes, in the language of a theophany, the promise and the intervention of Yahweh to save, as a sign of his loyalty).

Plöger claims that if Agur’s words do not go beyond v. 9, the section would be incomplete, and this is why v. 10, as an isolated verse with the verb קָלָל, functions as a segue to the redactorial, elaborated section of vv. 11–14. For Plöger, it is possible to keep vv. 1–14 together, due to the thematic interaction among their component verses.

According to Kaiser, the chapter’s first section begins with Agur’s declaration of God’s unreachable wisdom (vv. 1–4) and continues with human satisfaction in God’s revelation through his

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174 Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 116.  
175 Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 219–22.  
176 Pié y Ninot, La palabra, 47, 83.  
177 Plöger (Sprüche, 356) does not, however, see a structural unity between vv. 1–4 and 5–6 via the interaction between parts of vv. 1–4 and 7–9 and 5f and 10, which are related to vv. 11–14.
word (vv. 5–6), through the prayer of the pious (vv. 7–9), and finally concludes with the numerical wisdom-style sayings (דָּוָר דָּוָר דָּוָר דָּוָר), which cite examples of vice and violence (vv. 10–14).\(^\text{178}\)

In the manner of the Dividers’ interpretation, van der Ploeg, Lelièvre and Maillot partition Proverbs 30 between the general Section VI (vv. 1–14) and Section VII (vv. 15–33).\(^\text{179}\) After the title with Agur’s self-presentation and his atheistic declaration, a negative attitude toward existence is presented as well as to human comprehension of divine (vv. 1b–4). The positive answer of a believer (vv. 5–6) is based on Psalm 19. The prayer (vv. 7–9) is a supplication for life in peace and tranquility. Although vv. 11–14 are part of the numerical proverbs, the structure is not as visible as that of vv. 15–33, being mostly the curse of a detestable person that could be related to the Levites in Deut 27:14–15.\(^\text{180}\)

Clifford proposes that vv. 1–10 could be easily extended up to v. 14, given the interchangeable words and coherent stylistic segue, so that “vv. 1–5 and 7–9 can be read as logically coherent, and each is concluded by syntactically similar verses, vv. 6 and 10. Verses 11–14 are also a separate section, linked to v. 10 by the catchword curse in v. 11.”\(^\text{181}\) The same structure is maintained by Sović and Gilbert, who entitle the first section of Proverbs 30 as Words of Agur, Son of Yakeh, from Massa (Prov 30:1–14),\(^\text{182}\) and by Richter.\(^\text{183}\)

Recent studies by Koptak, Scoralick, Schwienhorst-Schönberger, Longman, Crenshaw, Gunnenweg, Moore and Gosse adopt the aforementioned structure, but also offer some new approaches to


\(^{179}\) Some scholars, such as Fox (Proverbs 1–9, 4–5), designate the appendix to Proverbs only by numbers: VI (Vla, 30:1–14 (9); Vlb, 30:15–33 (10–33); Vlc, 31:1–9 and Vld, 31:10–31.


\(^{181}\) Clifford, Proverbs, 256–58.

\(^{182}\) Antun Sović, Izreke, Biblija (Zagreb: KS, 1974) 635; Gilbert, La Sapienza, 18.

\(^{183}\) Richter, “Agur,” 419.
Agur’s section. Koptak finds the structure Do not lest four times in vv. 6–10 and 11–14, whereas in vv. 1–5 he sees a formulation about Knowledge of Wisdom and the Holy One. Scoralick divides the first part of the chapter into Agur’s words (vv. 1–6) and Agur’s prayer (vv. 7–9). Verse 10 serves to connect the theme of the prayer (vv. 7–9) as well to link the poem in vv. 11–14. Schwienhorst-Schönberger situates Proverbs 30 within the classical sixth section of the Book of Proverbs, where the first section extends up to v. 14. Longman treats Proverbs 30 as models of two very different sections, of which the first belongs to Agur (vv. 1–14), while the second consists of various numerical proverbs (vv. 15–33). The first segment of the first section (vv. 1–6) is Agur’s rejection of all wisdom, except that given by God. The second segment is Agur’s prayer (vv. 7–9). The self-standing v. 10 expresses the character of slander as a form of foolish speech, while in vv. 11–14 human character is presented by reference to evil persons. Crenshaw places Proverbs 30 among the five minor collections of the Book of Proverbs (24:23–34; 30:1–14; 30:15–33; 31:1–9 and 31:10–31) with Prov 30:1–14 being called by him the Second Incidental Section, in which the foreign name of Agur occurs.

Gunnennenweg and Moore’s theory that some biblical books (Exodus, Deuteronomy, Psalms and Job) are inspired by the author of the Book of Proverbs is contrary to Gosse’s view, which argues that Prov 30:1–14 inspired some of the poetic sections of the Old Testament (Exodus 15; Deuteronomy 32; 1 Samuel 2; 2 Samuel 22; and the Psalter). Thus, for Gosse, Ps 10:4 and the entire Psalm 119 were inspired by Prov 30:1. Furthermore, Prov 30:5 is to be interpreted in the light of Ps 12:7, and 12:2 in the light of

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184 Koptak, Proverbs, 654.
185 Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1255.
188 Crenshaw, Old Testament, 69; see also idem, “Clanging Symbols,” 53–55.
Prov 30:14. According to Gosse, the influence of Prov 30:1–14, especially Prov 30:5, is also attested in Psalm 18.\textsuperscript{189}

The Dividers recognize Agur’s section in vv. 1–14. In their view, a coherent formative structure begins with v. 15, where the numerical formula $x/x+1$ dominates. Although vv. 1–14 also have a numerical character (cf. vv. 2–4, and especially v. 7, and vv. 11–14), about which more will be said in the second and third chapter of this dissertation, the Dividers do not see vv. 1–14 as part of the numeralia but, rather, heavily relying on the LXX structure, argue that Agur’s section includes the first fourteen verses, followed by miscellaneous proverbs classified according to the numeric literary formula $x/x+1$.

2.2.5: The Moderates on the Dividers’ Theory of Proverbs 30 (vv. 1–9)

The early Jewish scholars Rabbi Meiri and Shevet MiYehudah attributed only the first nine verses to Agur’s section, as did Saadiah Gaon, who understood these verses as concerning King Solomon.\textsuperscript{190} These scholars, comparing the LXX’s divisions in Proverbs 30, found that vv. 11–14 are also part of the so-called Numerical Proverbs, which the LXX redactor, as mentioned previously, had separated from Prov 30:1–14 without solid reason. The 19th-century scholars Kitto, Horton, Herder and Perowne tried to find arguments favoring the Moderates’ alternative to the Dividers’ division of Proverbs 30.

Kitto, opposing the matrix or the LXX structure of Proverbs 30, claims that vv. 1–6 contain Agur’s confession of his faith, while vv. 7–9 belong to his prayer, after which the rest of the chapter belongs to different independent proverbial collections.\textsuperscript{191}

\begin{footnotes}
\item[190] Ginsburg and Weinberger, Mishlei, 625.
\end{footnotes}
Horton points out that the verses of Proverbs 30 appear randomly put together and later on were linked by a redactor’s literary work and attributed to one person called Agur. Horton is certain that the first six verses are directed to the question of humanity’s search for God and that vv. 5–9 provide the answer.\textsuperscript{192}

Herder asserts that Agur collected all the proverbs in Chapter 30, which is why his name אָגוּר as the Sammler ("Gatherer") corresponds to the various thematic segments of Proverbs 30. However, Herder inclines to the opinion that vv. 1–9 are by Agur. Thus, the first verse serves as a title, whereas vv. 2–4 present Agur’s enigmatic statement about God’s unknowability. Verse 5 is Agur’s affirmation about what counts for God, and vv. 6–9 his concluding prayer.\textsuperscript{193} In addition, Perowne’s observation about the “unique and highly interesting chapter of one of the wise children of the East (1 Kgs 4:30)” concludes: “The study of nature makes it clear that there is God (1); but who can tell Who and What He is (2–4)? Only by revelation can He be known; and in that revelation, held sacred from all admixture, man finds Him and is safe (5,6). To the God thus found and trusted the writer turns with a twofold prayer (7–9).”\textsuperscript{194}

Twentieth-century scholars, such as Torrey and Leeuwen, developed the Moderates’ theory about Prov 30:1–9. Torrey sees the brief introduction of Prov 30:1–9 as “the utterance of a man of letters who is notably self-conscious. His pride in his work is justified, as interpreters agree.”\textsuperscript{195} Leeuwen, disputing Scott’s claim of skepticism in Prov 30:1–4, states that “the entire section (Prov 30:1–9) needs to be taken as a whole and reflects a humble piety (cf. Job 42:1–6), recognizing the immense gap between God and humans (vv. 2–4)… And like Isa 55:8–11, vv. 5–6 assert that the cosmic gulf between God and humans is a form of God’s Word, prophetic and canonical Scripture respectively… Finally, there is an implicit

\textsuperscript{192} Horton, \textit{The Book}, 386–95.
\textsuperscript{194} Perowne, \textit{The Proverbs}, 179.
\textsuperscript{195} Torrey, “Proverbs,” 95.
contrast between the faithful Word of God (v. 5) and what faithless humans may say (v. 9).“ Cox, reverting to Scott’s view, suggests that the initial vv. 1–4 “supply the rational perspective for faith, while the prayer in vv. 7–9 illuminates the author’s concept of discipline, and that stands as a personal defense against the skepticism of vv. 1–4.”

Recent commentaries by Fox, Sæbø and Schulz align themselves with the Moderates’ theory. Fox, in his book entitled Proverbs 1–9 as well as in his introduction, translation and explanation of Proverbs in the Jewish Study Bible, follows the Dividers’ division of Proverbs 30 (Words of Agur, vv. 1–14 and Numerical Epigrams, vv. 15–33), whereas in a later book, Proverbs 10–31, he narrows the extent of Agur’s words. According to Fox, Agur’s words do not go beyond v. 9, where “Agur’s ignorance” (vv. 1c–3), “human inadequacy” (v. 4), “the perfection of God’s words” (vv. 5–6) and “a prayer for honesty and simplicity” (vv. 7–9) appear. Sæbø shares a similar view with Fox on the composition of Proverbs 30. The first nine verses are part of Agur’s prayer, which includes the humility in vv. 1–3, wisdom chain-questions in v. 4, sayings of Agur zum Ausdruck in vv. 5–6 and the final prayer in vv. 7–9.

The crucial argument in favor of the Moderates’ division scheme is that Agur’s section develops the theological teaching from Agur’s confession (vv. 1–4) to Agur’s prayer (vv. 5–9), or from Agur’s questions about God (vv. 1–4) to Agur’s answer about God (vv. 5–9), or, yet again, from Agur’s problem about God’s existence (vv. 1–4), through the revelation of God’s word (vv. 5–6), to Agur’s prayer and

197 Cox, Proverbs, 242–43.
199 Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 851.
petition for a safe religious path in life (vv. 7–9). These congruous elements in vv. 1–9 raise the issue of the influence of other biblical material on Agur’s section.

The Maximalists Gunnenweg and Moore found that a self-standing section of Prov 30:1–9\(^{201}\) “is filled with possible allusions to, and quotations of, other canonical books.” Thus, Schulz refer to Gunneweg’s theory: “v. 2// Psalm 73:22; v. 3//Psalm 73:17a; v. 4//Job 38f; v. 5//Psalm 18:30[31]; 12:6[7]; 19:8b–9[9b–10]; 119:140; v. 6//Deuteronomy 4:2; 13:1. The most significant of these are the parallels in Psalm 18 and Deuteronomy 4, the sage apparently affirming that wisdom writings also are the ‘flawless word of God’ to which, like the Mosaic Torah, ‘nothing should be added’. This should be understood not as the claim by the proponent of an independent wisdom tradition that it is equally authoritative, but rather as Agur’s ‘canon-conscious’ attempt to link proverbial wisdom to other ‘divinely inspired’ writings.”\(^{202}\)

There is no doubt that Prov 30: 1–9 reflects the “life of wisdom”\(^{203}\) and that the religious statement in Prov 30: 5–6 echoes the Israel monotheistic teaching that runs throughout the entire OT. The mutual influence of wisdom and religion is cohesive in Prov 30:1–9. The Moderates’ extension of Agur’s words to Prov 30:1–9 is supported by the common theme and segue up to v. 10. The new theme of v. 10 convinces the Moderates to conclude Agur’s discourse with v. 9.

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\(^{201}\) Gosse (“L’influence de Proverbs,” 528) similar to Gunnenweg and Moore found a self-standing section of 30:1–14 in the relation with other canonical books.


2.2.6: The Idiosyncratics on Proverbs 30

The difficult content of Proverbs 30 and different approaches by scholars have generated many tentative attempts to comprehend this chapter. The suggestions, proposals and arguments of some scholars have produced idiosyncratic approaches to Proverbs 30. The temptation to find a new line and structure in Proverbs 30 is not recent. Already in the 17th century, Pole, approximating the Maximalists (vv. 1–33), understood the entire chapter, not in terms of the proverbial content, but rather as an ancient prophecy by an unknown prophet or prophet’s son, which Solomon included in his Proverbs *sicut prophetia—non tantum de futuris est, sed generaliter rei alicujus interpretationem significant* (“as prophecy, not especially about the future, but rather about general things of various thoughts”).204 At the same time, Cartwright broke the chapter into two major parts: v. 1 is called *Inscriptione priore* and vv. 2–33 *Informatio seu corpus in sequentibus*.205 Another 17th-century scholar, Jansen, also divided the chapter into two general sections. Even though his proposal utilizes a structure similar to that of the Moderates, Jansen integrates the self-standing v. 10 into Agur’s section. Thus, according to him, the first section deals with the wisdom of Agur (vv. 1–10), while the second part is entitled *Generalitur subiungit* and includes vv. 11–33.206 Following this approach, Cajetan called Prov 30:1–9 the “Prophecy of the sage,” whereas vv. 10–33 are classified by him as an additional explanation of the prophecy of vv. 1–9, which he entitles *Subiungtur documenta moralia [descriptione prophetae studioso in scientia sanctorum]*

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205 Cartwright, *Commentarii*, 1262.
Additional moral documents [the investigation of the scholarly prophet in the field of the science of the saints]].

One prominent 18th-century scholar, Doederlein, also attributed the major part of Proverbs 30 to Agur. Doederlein finds in Chapter 30 the Spruchsammlung or Anthologie of a Jewish servant and his pagan lord, who express their statements in the form of an interview. After the title in v. 1, the pagan lord opens his segment in vv. 2–3 with an intention to learn and to know everything about Jewish religion. Agur’s following teaching of the unknowability of God’s designs of creation and perpetual human learning about the religion and morality is expressed in vv. 4–33 with warnings on the morally questionable human approach to the holy and society.

The prominent 19th-century scholars Geiger, Bickell and De Lagarde offered different structures for Proverbs 30. Thus, Geiger eliminated vv. 10–30 from Agur’s original words in his structure, attributing to him only the first (vv. 1–9) and very last part of Proverbs 30 (vv. 31–32).

Bickell’s approach differed from Geiger’s in proposing a dialogue between the two protagonists in Proverbs 30: the thinker Agur and the Polemiker who writes against Agur’s inability to obtain knowledge of God and who blasphemes by asking himself “wer Jahve sei.” Bickell divides the chapter into six sections. The first one is called Gott and comprises vv. 1–4, the next divisions are entitled as follows: Four Kinds of Incomprehensible in vv. 18–19; Four Unbearable in vv. 21–23; Four Small Wise in 4) vv. 24–28; Four with a Fearless Attitude in vv. 29–31; and Four Kinds of Tense Challenges in vv. 32–33. Agur’s section opens the chapter in vv. 1–4, after which the Polemicist’s section includes vv. 5–17 against Agur, where the first Polemik gegen Agur is presented in vv. 5–14 with a closer characterization.

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208 Doederlein, Sprüche, 182–199.
209 Geiger, Urschrift, 62–63.
in vv. 15–16. Bickell found the second “Polemik gegen Agur” in v. 17 and a later redactor’s incorporation and stylistic elaboration of the self-standing v. 20, but also vv. 24–28 and 29–33.

It seems that Dillon follows Bickell’s structure when, in the words of Agur, he sees the work of an orthodox Pharisee editor (mostly found in the first part of Prov 30:1–17) and a Jewish philosopher (mostly in the second part of Prov 30:18–33), who compiled and worked over the entire Chapter 30 and who viewed Agur as an agnostic and skeptic who reflects “the skeptical school of philosophy prevalent among the Jews of post-Exilian days” (vv. 1–6) and furthermore a sinner (vv. 15–17) and “a Sadducee and aristocrat who would rather obey a monarch who is ‘every inch a king’… than a native clodhopper who climbs up to the throne on the backs of the poor deluded people and grinds them down in the sacred name of liberty and independence (vv. 19–23).”

Böckel’s proposal shows how various proverbs join together, comprising a mutual, common idea. Separating the entire chapter into many independent episodes, he highlights the first verse as a common title for a collection of the following episodes: 2–3, 4–5a, 5b–6, 7–9, 15b–16, 18–20, 21–23, 24–28, 29–31 and 31–32, as well as the independent vv. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15a and 17.

De Lagarde separates vv. 1, 2, 3 and 4 into independent proverbs; vv. 5–9, 10–14, 17–19, 21–23, 24–26 and 27–29 into five compound proverbs; vv. 30; 31; 32 and 33 into conclusive proverbs; and vv.

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210 Bickell’s interpretation of the polemic in Proverbs 30 (1891) is a continuation of Ewald’s earlier proposal of dialogue between a believer and unbeliever in Prov 30: 1–15 (1867), which Scott (Proverbs, p. 176) utilizes in his similar structural idea for a skeptic and Jewish believer in Prov 30:1–6. Cf. Ewald, Die Salômonischen, 254.
213 Ernst Gottfried and Adolf Böckel, Die Denksprüche Salomo’s, übersetzt und für gebildete Leser kurz erläutert von Ernst Gottfried Adolf Böckel. Angehängt ist eine Zugabe philologischer und exegetischer Anmerkungen (Hamburg: J.A. Meissner, 1829) 74–47.
15, 16 and 20 into three self-standing proverbs. Cook’s recent approach is similar to De Lagarde’s. He argues that Proverbs 30 “contains the words of Agur and consists of a number of sayings consisting of numbers.”

The 20th-century scholars Franklyn and Westermann offer two different approaches to the structure of Proverbs 30. Franklyn, following the Minimalists, supports those who view the first part of the verse of Prov 30:1 as a superscription, “but the last word in that strophe, hāmmāšāʿ… conjoins the special and prophetic utterances of the perishing sage.” Thus, vv. 1b–3 consist of “Agur’s oracle confession,” while the self-standing v. 4 opens the chapter’s first rhetorical question and vv. 5–6 its second rhetorical question. These rhetorical questions “synchronize around the proper respect of divine promissory requests, oaths and human covenantal honesty, which is reflected in Agur’s prayer directed to the deity.”

Westermann links Agur with Qoheleth, on the presumption that the first four verses of Proverbs 30 might be additions, due to the pessimistic perspective of v. 2, which, according to Westermann, has no link with other material of Proverbs but mostly with Qoheleth. Furthermore, he excludes the prayer in 30:7–9 from Proverbs 30 because of its psalmic character and inadequate placement in the Book of Proverbs. In addition, vv.11–14, according to Westermann, is a self-standing episode “per se and a typical example of what was originally in single-verse characterization.”

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217 Westermann, Roots, 97.
3. The Numerical Section of Proverbs 30

As was explained previously (cf. *The Semi-Minimalists on Proverbs 30*), the numerical characterization of verses in the OT can be determined by the explicit mention of various numerations or by synonyms or homonyms, which characterize the same, similar or different meanings in a single textual structure. There are three major proposed divisions of the numerical sayings of Proverbs 30. While the Minimalists see the first half of Chapter 30 as extending to v. 4 or 6, they attribute more than two-thirds of the chapter to the *numeralia*. The Dividers follow the LXX division and give vv. 15–33 the common title of *Numerical Sayings*. According to the Moderates, the section of vv. 11–14 also belongs to the numerical proverbs.

The main difficulty with all three of these divisions is the concluding vv. 32–33 of the chapter. The conceptual conclusion in vv. 32–33, which the majority of scholars find difficult, leads to the logical inference that vv. 15–31 concern an introduction that establishes the numerical model for presenting moral and social issues. In addition, vv. 7, 10 and 15 cannot be the introduction of the numerical section of vv. 15–31 because they do not match the conceptual conclusion found in vv. 32–33. This problem is one of the reasons why Chapter 30 has to be taken as a structurally uniform and thematically coherent literary work. The coherence among the verses in Chapter 30 is the major theme of the third chapter of this dissertation.

3.1: The Maximal Numeralia of the Minimalists (vv. 7–33)

Minimalist advocates of the *numeralia* in Proverbs 30 attribute a maximum number of verses to the numerical sayings in Chapter 30. Thus, Mühlau and Zöckler incorporate into their second section a collection of twenty-five verses (Prov 30:7–33), entitling it “Different numerical thoughtful sayings, regarding the golden middle-way between rich and poor; from wickedness, greed, pride and
Arguing for the same view, Toy outlines the numerical structure as follows: vv. 7–9 presents “a prayer for preservation from the temptations of poverty and riches.” The self-standing v. 10 exhorts “against speaking ill of a servant.” According to Toy, four depraved classes of men are featured in vv. 1–14. Like v. 10, the self-standing v. 15a is not linked to the content of v. 15b, where the recurrent form of the numeration “three … four” begins. Thereafter, vv. 15b and 16 present four insatiable things. The self-standing v. 17 expresses the “punishment of filial disobedience,” whereas vv. 18 and 19 present “four mysterious things” and vv. 21–24 “four intolerable things.” Furthermore, quadruple things are summed up in vv. 24–28 with the title *Four things little but wise*, and in vv. 29–31 *Four stately things*. The last two vv. 32 and 33 are seen by Toy as a “sextet on pride and anger.” Sauer rearranges v. 7 and v. 11 into a recognizable Art der Zahlensprüche. Emending v. 7 with an additional number three (וָלָשָה), Sauer reads v. 7 thus: “Zwei Dinge habe ich erbeten von dir, drei wollest du mir nicht verweigern” (Two things I have asked of you, three you would not refuse me). With this verse, Sauer opens Agur’s numerical proverbial section.

Martin divideds vv. 7–33 into seven utterances arranged on a numerical basis (7–9, 11–15 + 16, 18, 19, 20–23, 24–27, 28–31), where he calls vv. 7–9 the *Proverbial Prayer* and classifies vv. 10, 17, 20, 32 and 33 as separate proverbs. Martin finds four classes of man in vv. 11–15 and 16. Verses 18 and 19 recall the wondrousness of the four inexplicable ways. The set of three utterances in vv. 20–23, 24–27 and 28–31 is drawn from the realms of social and animal life. According to Martin, the texts of the last two verses are “extremely uncertain,” and thus, the meaning of those is quite incomprehensible.

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Whybray also maintains that the form of vv. 7–9 “anticipates the numerical proverbs that dominate the rest of the chapter… and the pattern of the numerical proverb is unmistakable in the rest of the chapter.” Verses 15–16 feature the world’s inexhaustible things, vv. 18–19 are “typical of nature wisdom,” whereas vv. 21–23 concern the “general topos of the ‘world upside-down’ and give four examples of proper societal hierarchy.” Praise of the four small but wise things is presented in vv. 24–28 and of royal power in vv. 32–33. Concerning the extent of the numerical section of Proverbs 30, Whybray includes vv. 7–9 and 11–14 as part of the same collection, which he sees as being based, not on the common formula: $x/x+1$, but rather on an instance of metonymy in which the four repetitions of Denver in vv. 11–14 serve as an introductory pattern “from three to four” in v. 15.

McKane follows with the same idea of numerical composition, holding that after the editor’s work of unifying Prov 30:1–4 and 5–6, “the counsel and prayer of a sage” are presented in vv. 5–9. Besides the “fragment of instruction” in v. 10, “contemporary sins” are brought together in vv. 11–14. Four numerical things, “which are never satisfied,” are cited in vv. 15b–16, “four which are incomprehensible” in vv. 18–19 and “four earth-shaking occurrences” in vv. 21–23. Further, one finds “four small but accomplished creatures” in vv. 24–28 and “four which move regally” in vv. 29–31. The separate v. 17 is about the “dishonoring of parents,” whereas the self-standing v. 20 presents the immorality of the “adulteress.” Finally, the concluding vv. 32 and 33 can be entitled Misconduct and its Consequences.

According to Meinhold, although the proverbial section of vv. 5–14 contains an implicit numerical section in vv. 11–14, typical Zalensprüchen are found only in vv. 15–31 and are divided, for Meinhold, into seven subsections. The first one is v. 15a, which barely fits with the second subsection of

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224 McKane, *Proverbs*, 650–64; the same structure is found in Koptak, *Proverbs*, 659–62.
vv. 15b–16. Even though vv. 17–20 do not go together, they still concern the same group of wondrous things. The next group about the Welt des Menschen is located in vv. 21–23, whereas vv. 24–28 acknowledge Salomo Natur-Weisheit (cf. 1 Kgs 5:13) and vv. 32 and 33 form the Abschluss of the numerical collection.\textsuperscript{225}

The “maximal” count of the numeralia in Proverbs 30 (vv. 7–33) of the Minimalists shows similarities in division and explanation. The explicit count of the number two would be a solid argument to add vv. 7–9 to the numerical section, as is the implicit count of the four things expressed in vv. 11–14. The problem, as already noted, concerns the introduction. In other words, if the numerical section begins with v. 7, the numeralia “two” already opens the prayer for preservation from temptation and cannot be understood as an introduction to the rest of the numerical proverbs but instead as the conclusion to the elaborated human doubt in vv 1–4.

3.2: The Major Numeralia of the Dividers (vv. 15–33)\textsuperscript{226}

The Dividers divide Chapter 30 of the MT according the ancient LXX division. Their main reason for doing so is the literary formula x/x+1 (or 3+4), which starts with v. 15b and concludes with v. 31. Thus, regarding the numerical section of Prov 30:15–33, Hudal noted: “trotz der Kürze des Kapitels, es hat eine sehr grosse Zahl” (despite its brevity, the chapter has a very large numerical section).\textsuperscript{227} Loewenstein names the second segment of Proverbs 30 after the first word of v. 15 from Alûkâ.

According to the Targum פְּסֵמָה עָלָיוֹן (in the confrontation of the dangerous leech”), vv. 15–33 are

\textsuperscript{225} Meinhold, Sprüche, 505–14.

\textsuperscript{226} Regarding this Dividers’ division, Oesterley (Proverbs, 274–75) notes: “…it is probable that the original form of these was: first a couplet indicating the subject to be dealt with, and then two couplets giving details. This form is not kept up in the text as we now have it; but there are signs that it has suffered from being worked over.”

\textsuperscript{227} Alois Hudal, Die religiosen und sittlichen Ideen des Spruchbuches: Kritisch-exegetische Studie (Rome: Pontificium Institutum Biblicum, 1914) 228.
presented with their main themes in vv. 15–16, 18–20, 21–23, 24–28, 29–31 and 32–33, while v. 17 constitutes a self-standing division between two different numerical segments.

French and Skinner divide the section of Prov 30:15–33 into five segments: vv. 15b–16, 17–20, 21–23, 24–28 and 29–31, noting that the last two vv. 32–33 serve as the section’s conclusion.

For his part, Ewald separates Agur’s section from the numerical segments, entitling it as Other people’s portion, which includes the formula x/x+1 in vv. 15b–17, 18–20, 21–23, 24–28 and 29–31. According to Ewald, the conclusion in vv. 32–33 addresses concern about formal-social and natural roles in the world. On the other hand, Wildeboer, viewing vv. 17, 20 and 33 as redactorial, holds for the possibility of connecting the Zahlensprüche to Agur’s discourse. In this sense, the segue to the theme of God’s revelation is clearly present in the first section (vv. 1–14), whereas in the second section the reference to the Torah is only present as an allusion.

Gemser, approximating Oesterley’s division and following Ewald’s line of thought, holds that specific Hebrew proverbs with the sequences and parallelisms are barely recognizable in Prov 30:15–30. The themes are distinguished according to the number four in vv. 18–19, 21–23, 24–28 and 29–31, with the exception of the self-standing moralizing indications of vv. 17 and 20 and the practical advice in the concluding vv. 32 and 33.

According to Fritsch and Schloerb (based on KJ and RSV), the exceptions represented by the self-standing vv. 10, 17, 20 and 32–33 do not obviate the main composition of the numerical sayings: in vv. 15–16 as four insatiable things, in vv. 18–19 as four wonderful things, in vv. 21–23 as four unbearable

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228 Loewenstein, *Die Proverbien*, 283–89.
231 Wildeboer, *Sprüche*, 84.
things, in vv. 24–28 as four small but wise things, and in vv. 29–31 as four stately things. Following the same structure, Ringgren and Zimmerli divide Prov 30:15–33 according to its well-known themes. Thus, vv. 15, 16 and 17 contain four insatiable things, whereas vv. 18, 19 and 20 feature four mysterious things. The well-organized segment vv. 21–23 contains four types of unbearable humans and vv. 24–28 four types of small worldly but wise things. The self-standing proverbs in vv. 17 and 20, as well as the closing vv. 32 and 33, present different issues of human morality. In a similar manner, Barucq includes the proverbial excerpts in vv. 15–16, 18–20, 21–23 and 24–28 in the collection of numerical proverbs. The self-standing v. 17 and the concluding vv. 32 and 33 do not form an organized part of the segment, but mostly appear as the result of later redactorial work.

Plöger thinks that a chain of numerical proverbs lies behind the $x/x+1$ formula, which begins with v. 15 and expands into four types of Zahlensprüchen in vv. 15b–16, 18–19, 21–23 and 29–31. The verses that break the numerical chain are vv. 15a, 17 and 20. A self-standing group of numerical proverbs is also found in vv. 24–28, where the formula $x/x+1$ does not occur, but a numerical structure does connect it to the rest of the section, whereas the last two verses (32 and 33) form a kind of general conclusion of the section. Baumann follows Plöger’s structure of the numerical proverbs in vv. 15–33. In a similar manner, Kaiser’s numerical sayings are differentiated according to their themes in vv. 15b–16a, 18–19, 21–23, 24–28 and 29–31, and related to the self-standing proverbs of vv. 15a, 16b, 17, 20, 32, and 33.

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234 Ringgren and Zimmerli, *Sprüche*, 118.
236 Plöger, *Sprüche*, 357.
237 Baumann, *Die Weisheitsgestalt*, 256.
Westermann supports the widely accepted thesis according to which Prov 30:15–31 “is comprised of five principal parts: that which is insatiable (vv. 15–16); the mystery of motion (vv. 18–19); that which is unbearable (vv. 21–23); wisdom of the extremely small (vv. 24–28); and the stateliness of striding (vv. 29–31).”239 Along the same lines is the division proposed by Clifford, who claims that vv. 11–14 enlarge the ambient from the “vita domestica” to the “vita publica” as the transition to the new section of numerical sayings in vv. 15–33.240 In addition, Müntinghe proposes that the second section of Prov 30:15–33 contains moral maxims that could stand by themselves.241

Furthermore, van der Ploeg, Lelièvre and Maillot share the theory that the numerical proverbs in vv. 15–33 feature common aspects of “onomastica, numériques et progressifs”242 found and realized in the formula x/x+1 in vv. 15–16, 18–20 and 29–31. This formula and onomastica are also found in vv. 21–23 and 24–28. Under redactorial verses, they include v. 17 and the obscure concluding vv. 32–33.243

Scoralick, following the Dividers’ proposal, classifies the numerical sayings according to their major themes, seeing insatiability in vv. 15–16 and love as a wonderful thing in vv. 18–19, whereas in vv. 21–23 she finds an inverted world. The connection between the themes in vv. 15–16, 18–19 and 21–23 is broken by the self-standing vv. 17 and 20. The theme of small but clever things is expressed in vv. 24–28, whereas vv. 29–31 constitutes a royal segment. The end of the section in vv. 32 and 33 focuses on the theme of “Stossen” (beating).244

Longman, relying on preceding scholars’ approaches to the composition of Prov 30:15–33, proposes that the section consists of five major numerical segments (vv. 15–16, 18–19, 21–23, 24–28 and

239 Westermann, Roots, 96–97.
240 Clifford, Proverbs, 263–68.
241 Müntinghe, Sprüche, xv.
242 Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 319.
244 Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1256.
29–31), two self-standing verses (vv. 17 and 20) and an obscure concluding saying (vv. 32 and 33).245 This classical structure is also advocated by Skehan, Gilbert, Clements, Schwienhorst-Schönberger, Crenshaw, and Signoretto.246 Likewise, the same structure is proposed by Richter.247

There is no coherence between the introductory v. 15a and the concluding vv. 32 and 33 and, thus, the numerical implicit correspondence in the first section of the chapter (vv. 1–14) does not permit the splitting of the chapter into two independent sections, especially because the numerical character is spread throughout Proverbs 30. The Dividers, emphasizing the different theme in Prov 30:15–33, go further by claiming that these proverbs could be foreign literature because of the absence of a theological context. Instead, Chapter 30 could be a thematic movement from the religious and moral attitude (vv. 1–14) to the social environment (vv. 15–33). It is difficult to accept the theory of two different thematic sections in Prov 30:1–14 and 30:15–33.

3.3: The “Moderate” Numeralia of the Moderates (vv. 10–33)248

Modern Moderate scholars have usually incorporated the self-standing v. 10 into the numerical collection, but the early 17th-century scholar Piscator, although he attributes all thirty-three verses to Agur via his eleven subtitles, designates only vv. 11–33 as Res numeralia. Thus, vv. 11–14 name quatour genera sive classes improborum (“four classes of wicked”) and vv. 15–16 quinque res insatiabiles (“five insatiable things”), whereas v. 17 speaks of immorigeris liberis poenam denuntiat (“the penalty is

245 Longman, Proverbs, 528–33.
248 Thus Cox (Proverbs, 243) presents this section: “A collection of well-written, and clearly thought out proverbs and sayings. There is no particular inner unity, unless it be the classic binary structure common to the pure proverb form, and what seems to be a pervasive interest in the mysterious dimension of human life, the inexplicable, and therefore the perennially fascinating to the thinker and the poet.”
announced to the rebellious children”) and continues with quinque res inserutabiles (“five extravagant things”) in vv. 18–20, quatuor res intolerabiles (“four intolerable things”) in vv. 21–23, animalcula quatuor sapientia (“four instances of animal wisdom”) in vv. 24–28, quatuor que pulchero utuntur incessu (“four who march beautifully”) in 29–31 and dehortatur a—laxatione et ab instigatione irae (“the thing that dissuades man from laxities and the instigation of the anger”) in vv. 32–33.249

The modern scholar Kitto titles the independent v. 10 The Meanest Are Not to Be Wronged, which served here as a literary bridge between Agur’s words and six sets of quadrupled staves: Four Wicked Generations, vv. 11–14; Four Things Insatiable, vv.15–16; Parents Are Not to Be Despised, v. 17; Four Things Hard to Be Known, vv. 18–20; Four Things Intolerable, vv. 21–23; Four Things Exceeding Wise, vv.24–28; Four Stately Things, vv.29–30; and Wrath is to Be Prevented, vv. 32–33.250

Although Perowne maintains that Chapter 30 is unified by the common idea of reproach, he notes that, in some way, vv. 10 and 17 represent isolated proverbs. These proverbs then introduce the first and third collections of six numerical or quatrain proverbs, where vv. 11–14 allude to four detestable instances, vv. 15–16 four insatiable instances, vv. 18–20 four inscrutable instances, vv. 21–23 four intolerable instances, 24–28 four little but wise instances, and 29–31 four stately instances. The last two verses (32, 33) bring the collection to a close with a practical admonition against strife and contention.251

In the opinion of Scott, who is a Minimalist regarding the extent of Agur’s speech and a Moderate regarding the theory of the dialogue of the opponents in vv. 1–4 and 5–6 and later redactors’ elaborations and extensions of the sayings up to v. 9, the second section of Proverbs 30 consists of vv. 10–33, in which v. 10 is self-standing and prepares for the section of numerical proverbs with its formula x/x+1. The

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249 Piscator (Fisher), Proverbia, 399.
250 Kitto, Proverbs, 191; cf. J. D. Michaelis, Johann David Michaelis, 95–102.
251 Perowne, The Proverbs, 179–86.
excerpts of vv. 11–14, 18–20 and 21–23 follow this formula, whereas the additional quadruple proverbs of vv. 24–28 and 29–31 lead to the end of the chapter. He sees v. 15 as an anecdotal fable-proverb, and v. 17 and v. 20 as a prosaic intermezzo between the numerical proverbs.  

Fox gives the second section of Proverbs 30 the title Epigrams and Aphorisms, thus including Denouncing a Slave in v. 10; The Wicked Generation in vv. 11–14; The Epitome of Greed in v. 15a; Four Greedy Things in vv. 15b–16; Contempt for Parents in v. 17; Four Wondrous Ways—and One More in vv. 18–20; Four Things That Shake the Earth in vv. 21–23; Four Creatures Small but Wise in vv. 24–28; Four Creatures with a Stately Gait in vv. 29–31; and Churning up Quarrels in vv. 32–33.  

The second part of Prov 30:10–33, according to Sæbø, is a framed exposition “mehr als nur Zahlensprüchen” (“more than only numerical proverbs”). It is already obvious in v. 10 that this part has something of a Janus character that serves to downplay the friction between the excerpts of vv. 7–9 and 11–14. The first Reihenbildung is found in vv. 11–14, followed by the first metaphorical aphorism in v. 15. The first graded formation proverb is found in vv. 15bc–16, followed by the second aphorism in v. 17. The second graded formation is vv. 18–19 and the third graded formation vv. 21–23. The second Reihenbildung embraces vv. 24–28, followed by the fourth graded formation in vv. 29–31 and die Schlussmahnung in vv. 32–33.  

When the Moderates in their numerical proposals for Proverbs 30 include the proverbial stave of Prov 30:11–14, which is composed of a fourfold repetition of the noun דָּוֹר, they rightly extend the structural composition of the numerical proverbs to include two-thirds of Proverbs 30. However, the numerical composition does not begin with v. 11 since a clear numerical feature is already present in v. 7.

252 Scott, Proverbs, 178–82.  
253 Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 862.  
254 Sæbø, Sprüche, 368–74.
as is also the repetition of the pronoun מִּי as the metonym of the number four in v. 4. Thus, the Moderates make progress in their understanding of the numerical proverbs, approaching the Dividers (vv. 15–33), although they are still behind the Minimalists, who also included vv. 7–9 within the numerical section of Proverbs 30.

4. Various Identifications and Characterizations of Agur

Ancient translations such as the LXX and Vg do not mention the sage Agur because they do not interpret the root אגר as a proper name, but rather as an appellative. They attribute the authorship of Proverbs 30 to King Solomon as the sole author of the Book of Proverbs. The Jewish Talmudists accepted Solomon’s authorship alluded to by the name “Agur,” who is presented in Proverbs 30 as a sinner who repents. Later Christian scholars, however, abandoned this theory, while interpreting the figure of Agur in many different ways. Reformed Christian scholars try to identify Agur with a classical Greek philosopher, while some, based mostly on Prov 30:4, have found a Christological allusion in this verse.

This section will present a chronological survey of the various ways of interpreting the figure and qualities of Agur so as to reach a focused understanding of the character and personality who assumes the main role in Chapter 30.

Some modern scholars have found similarities between Agur’s words and those of Job and Qoheleth and, therefore, associate Agur with them. There are also a remarkable number of scholars who claim that Agur is a sage associated with a particular non-Israelite place and ambient. These scholars consequently recognize a polytheistic personality or even an agnostic who does not acknowledge the existence of God in the present world.
4.1: Agur is Jacob/Israel

Interpretations of the personality of Agur depend largely on how v. 1 is understood. Thus, J. Coccejus, a 17th-century biblicist, and P. Skehan, a 20th-century biblical scholar, view Agur as “(the sojourner) with the humble Jacob (cf. Gen 18:12–13; Ps 104:5–9), who is a mortal man (גֶּבֶר) and who is not a master of divine wisdom, and belittles his own human attainments.” Agur calls Jacob to mind when he denies “that he has angelic knowledge” (cf. Prov 30:3), this being seen as a reference “to Jacob’s vision at Bethel (Gen 28:11ff).”

4.2: Agur Is Solomon

Early Church fathers understood the words of Agur as an argumentum ad hominem. Thus, in Agur’s confession Basil recognizes the work of the Holy Spirit, who inspires humble servants of God to demonstrate the right path of sanctity. In a similar manner, Gregory of Nyssa explains the Solomonic wisdom in Prov 30:1 that comes from above: “Sufficiency does vary according to physical condition and present need (Basil), but in essence it means the ability to live honorably and respectably (Augustine).”

The Eastern Church, relying on the LXX translation, focuses attention on the first verse, which expresses the fear of God’s Word, thereby leading the believer to penitence and forgiveness. In a similar manner, the Eastern Church teaches that the knowledge of God is hidden from worldly wisdom, which God considers foolishness.

The major translations have understood Prov 30:1 as the title for the subsequent sayings by the sage. In looking at the figures mentioned in the title presented in v. 1, Shemôt Rabbah 6:1 recognizes two

255 Skehan, Studies, 42; Coccejus, Operum, 1262.
major personalities: Solomon in Agur and David in Jakeh. In a similar way, *Qoheleth Rabbath* 1:1 attributes three names to Solomon: Shelomo, Jedidiah and Agur. Rabbi Yehoshua (3rd century) went even further, attributing four names to Solomon: Agur, Jakeh, Lemuel and Qoheleth. Yefet ben ‘Eli the Karaite attributes five names to him: Shelomo, Jedidiah, Agur, Lemuel and Qoheleth “and says that he was called Agur because he gathered all knowledge within himself; and was called Lemuel, as being God’s vicar upon the earth. Jakeh is David and Ithiel applies to God as eternal and he twice told here (Ithiel and Ithiel).”

The Targum of Jerusalem (apud Malan, 537) explored the meaning of Solomon’s names, such as Jedidiah (*dilectus Dei*) “as being beloved of the King of the world; Shelomo, on account of the peace that reigned in his days; and Ban, as the builder of the Temple. He was also called Ithiel (God with me), because the spirit of God rested upon him; and lastly Jakeh as ruler over all.”

Targum Ashkenazi (1790) presents Solomon as a sage who was known beyond his kingdom and who used the name “Agur” as his cryptogram when he delivered his exceptional teaching of God’s incomprehensibility. However, a 10th-century Jewish commentator on Proverbs 30, Yafet ben ‘Eli the Karaite, asserted that Solomon used the name of Agur because *Agur nomen ei datum est, quod similis erat rei in unum locum congregatae et translatum est de voce: Collegit estate (Prov. 10,5) quasi ei obtigerit ex omnibus disciplinis scilicet scientia rerum humanorum et divinarum, aliquid et hoc quidem loco Agur appelatur nomine ad capitis argumentum apto* (“because he was like something assembled in one place, and [this name] is translated literally as ‘he gathered in summer’ (cf. Prov 10:5); since he acquired every

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259 Cf. Muehlau, *De proverbiorum*, 6 n. 3.


261 Izak Aikhel, *Proverbs with Targum Ashkenazi and Exegesis* [in Hebrew] (Berlin: Orientalischen Buchdruckerei, 1790) 144–45.
discipline, the knowledge of things human and divine, to some degree, belonged to him and, indeed, in this place he is called by the name Agur that fits the theme of the chapter.”

Thus, the Karaite presents Agur as a defender of God’s existence and his activity in creation, which Agur tries to prove and demonstrate to his listeners as “God’s vicar upon the earth.”

According to earlier Jewish scholars, Agur/Solomon was afforded a special but limited degree of privilege: *quod licet Jovi non licet bovi* (“what is legitimate for Jupiter, is not legitimate for oxen”) for, according to the Torah, there are three things prohibited for kings: too many horses, too many wives and too much money (cf. Deut 17:16–17). Solomon assumed that he was too wise to commit such sins “but he was proven wrong and thus, he composed these soul-searching words.”

This is why Rashi compares Agur with a sinner, who via the meaning of the appellative לְאִּיתִּיאֵל hides his violation of precepts in the Torah, claiming that “God is with me” so that it is allowed to “Me” (Solomon) to commit such kinds of transgressions. Finally, Solomon/Agur discovered his excesses to be wrong and, as an experienced sage, admits his ignorance before God and before his compatriots Ithiel and Uchal.

In this regard, Rabbi Samuel Strashun (Rashash) explains King Solomon in this way: לְאִּיתִּיאֵל—“God did not mean me” when he ignored God’s precepts, claiming that “he possesses enough strength and wisdom to overcome those temptations,” whereas the later Rabbi Zev Wolf Einhorn understands the first appellative לְאִּיתִּיאֵל as an assertion that “Agur shall not stray from God because God is with him.” In addition, Rabbi Hiyya bar Abba writes: “Why is his name called Agur”—because he collected the Torah; Ben-Jakeh—because he

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262 Japhet ben Elli Karaitae, 11; J. K. Hunter (*Book of Proverbs*, 461) generally calls the content of v. 1 *hidhoth*—“the dark speech.”


vomited it; *Leithiel*—since it is written in the Torah: ‘And let him not increase for himself women, so that his heart not swerve’ (Deut 17:17); *and-Ucal*—Solomon said: ‘I will increase but not swerve.’

Abraham Ibn Ezra, an 11th-century Jewish scholar, suggested that Agur might be a wisdom figure from Solomon’s time, a person who, because of his wisdom and compassion, had the illustrious title of “sage” and whom King Solomon honored by including sayings of his in his book. Furthermore, “Ithiel” and “Uchal” represent his close friends or scholars, who asked him about the relationship between transcendental and human wisdom.

The interpretation of the Midrash Mishle sees in Agur “one who girded his loins for wisdom and who stored up knowledge of Torah” and in Jakeh one clean of sin “because he swept it out in that he ignored the warning against multiplying wives.” The same source sees God’s sign of discernment and understanding revealed to Ithiel and Uchal as one who is able to stand with the others. According to Meir Leibush ben Jehiel Michel Weiser (acronym Malbim), Agur was a renowned sage who received wisdom, acquired knowledge and instructed his pupil Ithiel not once but twice, whereas according to Rabbi Sa’adiah Gaon and a later scholar, Yosef Kapach, the sage Agur was a disciple of Ithiel, who taught his own disciples in the name of Ithiel.

The 19th-century Jewish scholar Pulnovski, drawing on the Midrash tradition, holds that the words of Agur might be a collection of different elements that were unified, adapted and written by Solomon himself and which served as instruction on how not to fail and how to remain on the path of

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267 Grintz, “The Proverbs,” 88 n. 3.
271 Visotzky, *The Midrash*, 117; Avraham bar Ya’akov Gabishon, 109; Yitshak ben Shimshon, 73–74; Isaac Abraham Euchel, 144.
God’s righteousness. Later, Alfred Greenebaum, following Jewish tradition, attributes Agur’s words to Solomon’s teaching, which is addressed not only to sages but to all people, including Ithiel: “…a prophecy that illuminates sages from above.”

Based on Franklyn’s argumentations that Agur might be an old, tired, dying man (and Camp’s contrast between the immature Proverbs 1–9 and mature Prov 31:10–31), Moore sees Agur’s teaching as a culmination of Solomon’s wisdom, which reaches its maturity in Chapter 30, by expressing dependence on divine revelation.

Although the theory of Agur as Solomon has generally been abandoned by modern scholars, the reflection of Solomon’s wisdom throughout Chapter 30 relies mostly on the postexilic theology of the importance of God’s worship in Jerusalem and God’s revelation in the Scriptures, where Solomon is presented not only as the key figure associated with the Jerusalem Temple but also as one of the earliest composers of holy texts. Agur’s words embody the kind of self-denial (vv. 2–3) and personal prayer (vv. 5–9) that could be applied to every righteous man who acknowledges and confesses his failures, and who prays for justice, honesty and well-being. These characterizations of “Agur” by early Jewish scholars are solid evidence of efforts to attribute the “mysterious” name Agur to King Solomon.

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4.3: Agur Is Not Solomon

Major modern Christian and Jewish interpreters view Agur as a wise man who is talking to his disciples Ithiel and Uchal. Some of them, however, see in “Ithiel” a title of God himself (“God-with-me”), to whom Agur directs his speech and acknowledges his ignorance.278

Grotius, Vogel and Deoderlein identify Agur as a philosopher, like Theognis or Phocylides, who dialogued with his disciples Theognis, Cyrnus and Onomacritus.279 In his own work, Doederlein acknowledges Agur as a very wise servant of a pagan lord280 but Jansen and Michaelis hold that Agur might be a sage who had no relationship to Solomon. Jansen translates the name “Ithiel” as mecum Deus, whereas Uchal is understood as a form of the verb posse (יכל), supporting the thesis that Ithiel could be an acronym for Solomon.281 This approach is followed by such Reformed scholars as Abraham Calovius, who saw personifications of Christ in “Ithiel”—mecum Deus and “Uchal”—Omnipotente or one who can do (יכל) anything.282 Likewise, Polus argued that Agur collegit Sapientiam et Legem and thus invokes Christi redemptoris opera in the personification of “Ithiel”—Deus homo and “Uchal”—Potens fuit or Omnipotente.283 In a very similar way, Bohl discovered in Agur a man who profoundly searches for verum fonte sapientiae Dei, which can only be found in Christ as incarnatum Verbum Domini (cf. Prov

280 Doederlein, Sprüche, 182.
282 Abraham Calovius, Ad Proverbia, Ecclesiastes, Canticum Canticorum (Meursius: Halle-Wittenberg, 1660) 378; cf. also Kennicott and De Rossi, Notes, 483–84; Holden, An Attempt, 366; Muenscher, The Book of Proverbs, 251.
283 Pole, Synopsis, 1652–53.
Cartwright sees an analogy between the words of a David-like Agur as they were directed to his mother, Bathsheba, and the gospel that Christ would eventually teach his Church concerning the *viae aeternae*, the entanglement of ambition and the duty of elation *anima*.

Philip Melanchthon also tried to show that a statement in Prov 30:1 conveys the oneness and imperceptibility of God’s word as *lucerna peduis meis*. Cajetan interpreted Jerome’s *filius vomiter* (תִּבְנֵי יָקֶה) as a *filius iniquitatis* or perhaps *filius nuptiarum*—a married son. In light of the latter proposal, some scholars present “Ithiel and Uchal” as *uxores Aguri*—“Agur’s wives.” Thus, Schelling writes: *Ithiel igitur et Uchal feminae fuerunt et quidem uxores Aguris*—“Ithiel as well as Uchal were women and indeed Agur’s wives.”

Cajetan disagrees with Rashi that in Chapter 30 Agur/Solomon is a sinner who repents, seeing him more likely as a prophet who confesses that *hoc El mecum*—“God is with me,” as the apostle professes *gratia Dei mecum* (cf. 1 Cor 15:10).

On the basis of Prov 30:1, F. Carrière asserts that *fundamentum sapientiae est scire se nihil scire; Dei enim majestas inscrutabilis est & respectu eius sufficiencia quaelibet mortalium ignorantia* (“the foundation of wisdom is to acknowledge ignorance; for God’s majesty is inscrutable and its respect is enough for every mortal ignorance”). Unlike Carrière, Johann Piscator (Fisher) holds that the words of Agur significat prophetiam nempe sermonem de re molesta alicui eventura per metonymam

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286 Melanchthon, *Explicatio Proverborum Salomonis*, 211.
287 Joseph F. Schelling, *Salomonis regis et sapientis que supersunt eiusque esse perhibentur omnia ex ebraeo latine verit notasque ubi opus esse visum est adiecit* (Stuttgartie [Stuttgart]: In libraria Loefundina, 1807) 137.
methaphoricam ("prophecy as a sermon about bothersome matters presented in metonymic metaphors") and contain an extract of prophecy for both the unlearned and discerning publics.\footnote{Johann Piscator (Fisher), Proverbia, 399.}

A later 17\textsuperscript{th}-century biblical scholar, Trapp, who places Agur, "an excellent man—Gheber," in the time of King Solomon or Hezekiah, says the following about him: "It is a high pitch that he flies, for he knew well that godliness begins in right knowledge of ourselves, so it ends in the right knowledge of God." Trapp does not treat Ithiel and Uchal as proper names, but translates them as appellatives: "Let God be with me, let God Master be with me, and I shall prevail." Trapp also attributed Christological meaning to these names.\footnote{John Trapp, Commentaries upon the Books of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes and the Song of Songs (London: J. Bellamie, 1650), 345–46.}

Johann G. Herder holds that although Prov 30:1 presents an enigma, the subject of the verse is a man called Agur, an aphorist who personally worked on the “Sammlung eines Verfassers” (the collection of an author) of Proverbs 30. After instructing Ithiel and Uchal as his sons or disciples in an extremely passionate way ("im Feuer der Rede"), Agur then downplays his authority when he turned his attention from philosophical to metaphysical expressions where, in contrast to foreign metaphysicians who claim to posses absolute knowledge, he confesses his constant failure to acquire the same.\footnote{Johann G. Herder, Herders sämmtliche Werke, 125.}

Lawson claims that Agur was “honoured like Obadiah and Jude to write a very small portion of the Holy Scripture” and taught Ithiel and Uchal by the same spirit of Christ about arrogant people who claim to be wiser than Solomon, Agur and even Christ.\footnote{Lawson, Exposition, 375–409.} Also, Miller’s presentation of “Agur” —“I
fear” is Christological: Solomon, who collected and connected the verses in Chapter 30, prophesized about Christ in the exposition of the “Strong Man” in Prov 30:1–4.  

The traditional view that the authorship of Proverbs is closely connected with Solomon has to be viewed in light of the broader context. The ancient redactor who worked on the Proverbs of Solomon found two additional chapters (30–31) theologically instructional, morally stimulating and sociologically appropriate for the wider context of the Book of Proverbs. The protagonist of Proverbs 30 is an ancient sage who perspicaciously deals with personal wisdom and who interwove his knowledge and observations with material that had already been utilized by other sages in different ways and situations. In this context, major scholars agree that Agur was a knowledgeable man who instructed his contemporaries about obedience to Torah and the human incomprehensibility of God’s knowledge.

4.4: Agur Is Somebody like Qoheleth, Job or Calcol

Aka Ralbag (Geršonides), a 13th-century Talmudist, identified Agur (“the gatherer”) with Solomon and Qoheleth (“the collector”), the sage who collected and preserved the wisdom treasury of the Kingdom of Judah, while Jakeh “suggests that Solomon intended to cast off, as if by vomiting, what was boring and incorrect, so that the correct ideas would remain.” On the same basis, a later Jewish scholar, Ibn Nachmias, tried to promote the virtue of humility by reference to Ithiel and Uchal, Agur’s disciples who asked him to tell them the secret of the Torah, which cannot be reached by human arrogance but.

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294 Miller, A Commentary, 511.
296 Kravitz and Olitzky, Mishlei, 293.
mostly by everyday piety. Cheyne thinks that first four verses of Proverbs 30 derive from Qoheleth, which a later editor of Proverbs incorporated into Chapter 30: “It is an extremely plausible view that haḵ kōhēleth was also adopted by the editor who prefixed the title to the strange little poem in Prov. 30:1b-4.” Claus Westermann also views the content of Prov 30:1–4, especially the prayer in vv. 7–9, as thematically related to the Book of Qoheleth.

Modern scholars, such as Tur-Sinai, comparing Agur with Job, argue that Agur is not a doubting man but rather one who argues with the contemporary doubting public about God’s power and justice, and who prevails in his argument that wisdom and knowledge can only be granted by God. Gemser presents Agur as a fighter with God who experienced a mystical-ecstatic state and, similarly to the Psalmist of Psalm 73, confesses his human limits and ignorance. According to Barucq, Agur’s verses contain “en attitude d’humilité… Très aisement Dieu confondre la sagesse des sages en faisant appel au mystère de l’immense univers, signe de sa propre transcendance, comme dans Job” (“God very easily confounds the wisdom of sages using the mystery of the vast universe, as a sign of his own transcendence, as in Job” [38:1–38; 40:4ff and 42:2–6]). Likewise, Pié Ninot recognizes in Agur somebody like Job, who had been searching for wisdom but becomes aware of his human limitations, ultimately relying solely on the Word of God as already revealed and explained to men and God’s infinite wisdom. According to Whybray, Agur confesses “his stupidity and ignorance of God” and thus identifies himself with Job in 42:1–3 or the Psalmist in Psalm 73:22.

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301 Gemser, *Sprüche*, 81.
304 Whybray, *Proverbs*, 408.
To those scholars who have understood Agur as Qoheleth, Motais objected that “le livre des Proverbes, à partir surtout du chapitre X, est un recueil de pensées détachées, une collection de sentences la plupart du temps sans rapport entre elles, ou dont la relation ne s’étend pas au-delà de deux ou trois versets” (“The Book of Proverbs, especially from Chapter 10, is a collection of detached thoughts, a collection of sentences mostly unrelated, whose relationship does not extend beyond two or three verses”). However, Geiger compares “Agur” with “Qoheleth” and translates both as Sammler (collector) who, after the confession of personal ignorance, mocks all who claim that they can successfully reach knowledge about the transcendent. Also, McKane characterizes Agur as an ironic person who “with a mock ruefulness observes that others seem to know all about God and to have him completely in their grasp, whereas he, poor fellow, is apparently sub-human, since for him God is shrouded in mystery.” With reference to Job, Qoheleth and Baruch, Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez declare: “la stessa dinamica di impotenza umana e rivelazione divina, stavolta nei riguardi della saggezza o sapienza, la troviamo in Gb 28 e Bar 3–4. Il Qoèlet insiste sulla fatica umana e sulla sproporzione dei risultati” (“sometimes in the thoughts of the wisdom and knowledge, we find in Job 28 and Baruch 3–4 the same dynamics of human limits and divine revelation. Qoheleth insists on human toiling and on the disproportion of the results”).

M. Hiller found in Agur a biblical person whose wisdom is compared with the wisdom of Calcol in 1 Kgs 4:31, which only Solomon, as the wisest man in Israel, surpassed and explains Lemma Auguris: Dictum verissimum viri Ittiïelis; Ittiïelis qui Uchal vel Ittiïelis qui etiam Calcol dicitur qui ambo inter,

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306 Geiger, Urschrift, 62.
307 McKane, Proverbs, 646–47.
308 Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 599.
4.5: Agur Is a Practical Hebrew Believer

The theological component of Agur’s teaching about the incomprehensibility of God (vv. 2–4) gave rise to a thesis about Agur as a practical believer, a biblical example of human obedience and disobedience to God. Indeed, the LXX, Syr and Vg portray the believer Agur in a positive light. The theory of Agur as a practical believer is also operative in the theory of Agur as Solomon, who sinned and repented after acknowledging his sin. Still, the difference between Agur and Solomon lies in Agur’s critique of power and arrogance (Prov 30:2–4), wealth (Prov 30:8), the oppression of servants and the poor (Prov 30:10–14) and deviance from the Law by the the high class in society (Prov 30:18f.). In this sense, there is an obvious value in Michaelis’ evaluation of Agur as a humble believer and searcher for truth, who confesses that “klare Wahrheit der natürlichen Theologie (wäre) ganz verbergen” (clear truth of natural theology [would] be completely hidden). 310

Grätz presents Agur as a theologian who “nur durch und mit Gott verstehet er etwas” (only through and with God [could have] understood something). 311 Zöckler, relying on Herder’s view, sees in Agur not a man of discussion or dialogue (as do Grotius, Vogel and Doederlein), but predominantly as a sage who, with väterlichen Rathes presents his teaching to the public. 312 Plöger adopts the same line, presenting Agur as a man of contemplation (v. 1), inquiry (v. 4), exhortation (vv. 5–6) and prayer (vv. 7–

309 Mathew Hiller, Institutiones Linguae Sancte quibus Analogia Hebraismi ad brevis, easdemque generalis et nullis impeditas exceptionibus regulas revocatur novisque observationibus quae à scriptoribus artis tradita locupletantur additi sunt Indices (Tübingen: J. G. Cotta, 1720), 143 and “Index,” n. 5.
310 Michaelis, Johann David Michaelis, 95.
312 Zöckler, Sprüche, 209.
9). In a view similar to that of Zöckler, Fox thinks that Agur contrasts human virtues with wisdom and knowledge of God and in verbal protest glorifies God’s dominion over all knowledge and wisdom.

Agur as a practical believer is presented first and foremost as a religious figure, who relies on revelation and who acknowledges human intellectual limitations due to the difficulties of going beyond the earthly horizon and seeing the expanse of heaven.

4.6: Agur Is a Humble Searcher for God

Related to the view of Agur as a practical believer is the evaluation of Agur as a humble searcher for God. Seeing in Agur’s personality an incarnation of humility, Bridges acknowledges Agur’s words as divine instruction “given unto Ithiel and Ucal (Ithiel especially), probably two of his scholars, whose names are equally unknown to us. Perhaps they came to him for instruction, and he was led to express himself in the most humbling sense of his own ignorance.” In a similar manner, Conant presents Agur as a Hebrew of profound wisdom and practical knowledge, who makes a modest profession of his “own want of insight and knowledge and especially of his inability to comprehend the Holy.” Agur rebukes the arrogant pretensions of science, which “with all its grand achievements, has only brought within our view a wider range of the material universe, and of the substances and organic structures perceptible by the senses.”

Bertheau sees Agur’s speech as beginning “mit dem Bekenntnisse, dass er sich umsonst abgemüht habe Gott zu ergründen” (“with the acknowledgment that he had tried in vain to grasp God”). According to Bertheau, there are many questions that Agur struggles over with God, but he finally

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313 Plöger, Sprüche, 356.
314 Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 854.
315 Bridges, An Exposition, 500.
316 Conant, The Book, 79.
realizes that God’s revelation can only be found in the humble silence of faith. Muenscher claims that Agur’s language is “the language of unaffected humility, springing from a consciousness of moral and intellectual deficiencies. Like Amos, Agur was not a professed and educated prophet or the son of a prophet; yet the Lord taught him to utter divine instructive and weighty truths.”

Frankenberg’s remarks on Agur’s wisdom note his cry to God because of human inability to grasp divine wisdom or understand God’s acts in nature and the course of the world. Knabenbauer asserts that Agur professes himself to be a great researcher of God’s wisdom, who comes to the resigned conclusion that an understanding of God cannot be reached or measured by human parameters. Agur humbly confesses that the knowledge of the holy, i.e., transcendental wisdom and knowledge, can only be acquired by saints. Fritsch highlights Agur’s awareness that what he knows in part is not foreign to religion and faith. In addition, Agur offers a methodological approach to ignorance by urging that “the first thing to do with ignorance is to acknowledge it.” Gottlieb also presents Agur as “a humble and prudent man who realizes that no one is completely capable of understanding the wonders of God and his creation.” A similar comment is made by Meinhold, who sees in Agur’s confession a religious acknowledgement of human intellectual and metaphysical limitations. Leeuwen recognizes humble piety and the immense discrepancy between God and humans in Agur’s speech.

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317 Bertheau, Sprüche, 168.
319 Frankenberg, Sprüche, 159–60.
321 Fritsch and Schloerb, The Book, 948.
323 Meinhold, Sprüche, 495.
324 Leeuwen, The Book, 250.
Clifford, similar to Fritsch, presents Agur as a humble supplicant who “tactically” wants to gain God’s sympathy and reward as one who will be elevated by humiliating himself (cf. Matt 23:9–12).\(^{325}\)

According to Scoralick, Agur poses rhetorical questions (cf. Isa 40:12–17) about God’s knowledge and wisdom. He is a seeker who confesses that a human approach to understanding transcendental things is insufficient.\(^{326}\)

In Agur, as a humble searcher for God, are encountered a believer, a theologian and scholar who is capable of understanding the coherence in the created world with its entire contingency and its limits. In the same manner, Agur acknowledges the Creator with all his unlimited, transcendental and unattainable immensity, which human intellectual capability is not sufficient to grasp. This is what Agur discovered, acknowledged and tried to convince his public.

### 4.7 Agur Is an Ignoramus but Still a Believer

From the theory of Agur’s humility and the acknowledgment of human limitation developed the theory of human ignorance and piety. Thus, Umbreit, following Herder’s exposition of Agur’s teaching, regards Agur’s words as the expression of human ignorance acknowledged and manifested in a metaphysical way and with categorical arguments. Ironically, Agur mocks himself (vv. 2–3) and expresses a hypothetical riddle (v. 4). After the metaphysics upon which he toiled, Agur turns to spiritual and religious praxis (vv. 5–9).\(^{327}\) After examining vv. 1–3, Delitzsch proposes that Agur in v. 4 “finds the reason why in divine things he has failed to attain unto satisfying intelligence, not in the ignorance and inability common to all men—he appears to himself as not a man at all, but as an irrational beast, and he misses in himself the understanding which a man properly might have... the more limited a man is in his

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\(^{325}\) Clifford, *Proverbs*, 257.

\(^{326}\) Scoralick, *Sprichwörter*, 1255.

\(^{327}\) Umbreit, *Philologisch-kritischer*, 393–94.
knowledge of God… so much the more thankful must he be that God has revealed Himself in history (vv. 5–6).”

Garrett says that the author Agur declares ignorance and “challenges the reader to admit that no one has achieved direct understanding of the world and the truth behind the world ever,” while offering his understanding and teaching about human morality and ethics. In a similar way, Sæbø presents Agur as a man who unsuccessfully searched for wisdom, almost died of exhaustion and finally accepted his human intellectual limitations. Also, according to Koptak, vv. 1–4 deal with Agur’s despair and vv. 5–6 with “encouragement to keep the promises in mind as an answer to Agur’s despair.” Similarly, Waltke describes Agur as an inspired man who calls attention to his own “ignorance (in order) to confront Ithiel, who represents all Israel, to know wisdom.”

It seems plausible when Richter claims that the presentation of Agur as an ignoramus would be an unusual self-presentation. Instead, Agur makes a statement that should be interpreted as counterfactual: someone who considers himself ignorant can gain wisdom from God through his self-denial and piety. The presentation of Agur as an ignoramus is not necessarily negative, especially if in the darkness of ignorance the light of righteousness is present.

**4.8: Agur Is an Unknown Foreigner of Massa or Mash**

The real problem concerning the name “Agur” is that the name is not otherwise mentioned in the Bible or extra-biblical literature. Agur’s father, Jakeh, is also a *hapax* in biblical literature. Beginning

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328 Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 272, 278.
with Hitzig’s translation of v. 1, Agur became a citizen of Massa of the Ishmaelite tribe in north Arabia.

At the same time, some Assyriologists identified Agur with the land of Mash, “a district between Palestine and Babylonia, and the traces of nomadic or seminomadic life (…) found in Gen. xxxi and xxxii.” Modern scholars did not pay much attention to determining the location of the hypothetical city “Massa.” Instead, Hitzig’s *egg of Columbus* inspired a whole constellation of modern scholars to follow the “Massianite” thesis (Stuart, Zöckler, Bertheau, Schulz, Strack, Horton, Wildeboar, Frankenberg, Plöger, Muehlau, Zöckler, Delitzsch, Baumgartner, Currie Martin, Knabenbauer, Ploeg, Schneider, Ringgren – Zimmerli, Scoralick, Meinhold, Forestell, Murphy, Scott, Lelièvre and Maillot, Clifford, Longman, Perdue etc.). Thus, Stuart describes Agur as a representative of Jews in Edom, specifically in Massa, who after expatriation during the time of Hezekiah (1 Chr 4:41–43), proceeded to Edom and conquered the remainder of the Amalekites, and thereafter subjected orthodox Hebrew and religious teaching (30:5–6) to the ontological and philosophical teaching of the local sages (30:1–4).

Ringgren and Zimmerli also associate Agur with Massa—a northern Arabian tribe of the Ishmaelites. They conclude that Agur dealt with God’s deeds and wisdom, which was unattainable for humans, while the only consolation to humans was the revelation of the Scripture.

The *Massaitic* hypothesis has had a strong impact, even among current scholars of biblical wisdom literature. The truth is that the Bible contains the proper noun *Massa* as the seventh son of Abraham’s son Ishmael, who inherited the territory of the northern part of Arabia. It might be that, in tribute to him, a certain city Massa received its name (cf. Gen 25:15). Scholars who support the theory that Agur’s provenance is from the northern territory of Canaan called “Mash” rely on 19th-century

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archeological excavations of the necropolis between Haran and Gilead (cf. Gen 28:2; 31:25).\textsuperscript{339} Both theses remain unproven because of the lack of more precise biblical and archeological evidence.

4.9: Agur Is an Ancient Sage and Teacher

The scholars who do not find remarkable theological meaning in Agur’s teaching classify Agur as one of the ancient sages and teachers. Thus, Müntinghe, presuming an unknown origin for Agur, presented in Proverbs as “grosser Lehrer,” views Agur as a researcher who tried without any result to understand transcendental things according to established natural philosophical methods and in the end confesses that “alle meine Denkkraft ist weg” (“all my power of thought is gone”).\textsuperscript{340}

Keil presents Agur as a philosopher and theologian who confronts two classes of people: the first class are less dangerous people who are called Ithiel (“Mit-mir-Gott”) and who attribute God’s wisdom and knowledge to themselves. The more dangerous people are those called Uchal (“Ich-bin-stark”), who neglect the Holy Spirit, claiming that wisdom and virtues pertain to human nature.\textsuperscript{341}

Kitto sees Agur as the wise and pious foreign or “proper name of some unknown person distinguished for his wisdom, and whose words were deemed worthy of a place in the same book with those of Solomon.”\textsuperscript{342} Conant, on the contrary, sees Agur as a Jewish believer and sage of profound wisdom, who expresses his inability to comprehend the Holy.\textsuperscript{343} Similarly to Kitto, Perowne notes that the “wise Teacher is regarded as giving vent to the weariness and disappointment consequent upon the vain effort of ‘exercising himself in great matters which are too high for him’ and as turning in what follows,

\textsuperscript{340} Müntinghe, \textit{Die Sprüche}, 95.
\textsuperscript{342} Kitto, \textit{Proverbs}, 192.
\textsuperscript{343} Conant, \textit{The Book}, 79.
with relief, to the plain pursuit of practical wisdom and duty.”344 With reference to Conant’s conclusion, Oesterley interprets Agur as a sage who is “contrasting his infinitesimal smallness and weakness with God’s power.”345

The views of Herder, Umbreit and Zöckler are taken into account in the interpretation of French and Skinner, who think that Agur gives an answer to his disciples who “had ascribed to their favorite teacher an extraordinary degree of capacity and knowledge, in respect of the general course of the divine government and the proper conduct of human life. Agur disclaims any particular acquaintance with these great truths, and refers all the superiority, which he might appear to possess in subjects of this lofty nature, to those revelations, which the Almighty had been pleased to make, from time to time, both of Himself and of the ways of His Providence.”346

Giving primacy to Agur’s wisdom and teaching, modern scholars play down Agur’s religion as a Jew and present Agur as a wise man who teaches his disciples about fundamental knowledge and its limits. However, it is impossible to eliminate the monotheistic element of creation in Prov 30:1–4 and the theological expression of purity (cf. Ps 18:31 [= 2 Sam 22:31] and invariability (Deut 4:2; 13:1) of the word of God in Prov 30:5–6.

4.10: Agur Is a Skeptic Who Does Not Know What the Truth Is

The key to overcoming the acknowledgment of ignorance for those who are aware of genuine human intellectual and spiritual limitation is practical faith. Otherwise, human ignorance can cause frustration, which finds expression in ironic skepticism. This skeptical approach is followed by scholars such as Bickell, who presents Agur’s inability to grasp knowledge about God. Bickell claims to recognize

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345 Oesterley, Proverbs, 270.
this inability in the ironic references to a heavenly journey (v. 4a), extraordinary power and angelic knowledge (v. 4c), which are simply unattainable for humans.\footnote{Bickell, “Kritische,” 83.} Comparing the role of God and the king in the Book of Proverbs, Wilke asserts that Prov 30:1–14 presents Agur as a skeptic who, in trying to acquire knowledge about God, found himself lacking the ability to grasp the divine dimension of knowledge and behavior.\footnote{Alexa F. Wilke, \textit{Kronerben der Weisheit: Gott, König und Frommer in der didaktischen Literatur Ägyptens und Israels} (FAT 2/20; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006) 232.} Aitken thinks that Agur openly “confesses his lack of knowledge of God and his lack of wisdom” and ironically questions those “who professed a deep understanding of God and his ways (cf. Eccl 8:17).”\footnote{Kenneth T. Aitken, \textit{Proverbs} (OBC; Oxford: University Press, 2001) 421.} It is notable that Perdue entitles the small collection of Prov 30:1–4 as \textit{Agur’s Mantic Collection}, where Agur’s capricious act toward divine wisdom and immortality “may reside behind the skepticism of Agur.”\footnote{Perdue, \textit{Wisdom}, 70.}

The most famous portrayal of Agur as an ignorant skeptic is by Scott. Although Bickell and later Ewald had already proposed the idea of a dialogue between two opponents, Scott identifies Agur as a man who wants to convince others of his suspicious and skeptical view of human knowledge and intellectual power. Scott also perceives a dialogue between two opponents: one is Agur, a skeptic who denies God’s existence (or a skeptic who cannot know God), the other is an Orthodox Jew who is offended by “such blasphemous denial of God.”\footnote{Scott, \textit{Proverbs}, 176.} Following the same idea, Cox takes Agur to be representative of Israel’s enemies, whose folly “tends to see God as an aloof, uninterested divinity… Agur maintains his anonymity and, thus, qualifies to stand with Job as representative of a widely-held point of view—a deep-seated skepticism.”\footnote{Cox, \textit{Proverbs}, 239.}
An intermediate varicosity of this skeptical interpretation, not as radical as Scott’s, is represented by Franklyn, who views Agur more as an example of constant human frailty, ignorance and uncertainty.\(^{353}\) In a similar way, Lelièvre and Maillot describe Agur as one who searched for God but did not find him and, losing the way, tragically concluded: “c’est fini!”\(^{354}\) Also, Strömberg Krantz, in her reading of Proverbs 30, presents Agur as “a man not supported by God” and so is reduced to (existential) exhaustion.\(^{355}\) Longman basically follows Franklyn’s view that Agur is a public religious confessor of “human frailty, ignorance and uncertainty.”\(^ {356}\)

In Agur’s skepticism, it is possible to highlight three variants of the same idea. In the first, scholars present Agur’s skepticism as a failure to grasp more complete knowledge about God. He exhausted himself in unsuccessful research and concluded that there is no way to be found in the intellectual research of theology. The most extreme current presents Agur as a frustrated elder, who mocks everyone who claims to have any sort of relationship with the divine. As a radical skeptic, Agur is not interested in any kind of spiritual devotion and tries to persuade everyone that interaction between the divine and human is absolutely impossible. The third interpretative variant stands midway between the previous two, putting the emphasis on the futility of the attempt to comprehend the divine. Agur’s complex presentation of possible human “angelic” capabilities, both in the intellectual and spiritual dimensions, fails because humans clearly cannot achieve supernatural wisdom and transcendental spiritual qualities.

4.11: Agur Is an Agnostic or Even an Atheist

It is Holden who sees in Agur not a mysterious personality but a concrete person with a concrete name, alongside the other two names mentioned in v. 1. Agur is a foreigner and an agnostic or polytheist, who cannot be identified with Solomon, Jesus or other biblical personalities.\(^{357}\) Lipiński, by contrast, presents Agur as a Greek foreign sage, who transmits the experience of the boastful *Athlete* and directs his words of might and power to the pious Ithiel.\(^{358}\)

Dillon, comparing the “bitterest irony of Job and the most dogmatic agnosticism of Qoheleth,” asserts that Agur was a skeptic and representative of “ancient Hebrew agnosticism.”\(^{359}\)

The theory of Agur’s skepticism is not far from the more radical theory of Agur’s atheism. In the poet Agur, Ewald finds an atheistic, impious poet who *Deum esse negaret* and who, with implausible dialectic argumentations, denounces religious and pious people who consequently oppose him (vv. 5–7) and other *Hochmüthiges*.\(^{360}\) In the same line, Torry is convinced that the message of v. 1 contains some blasphemy against God’s existence, which the Jewish doctors considered intolerable and, therefore, not only changed the text (cf. MT, Prov 30:1) but also moved it from its original place (cf. LXX, Proverbs 24).\(^{361}\)

The identification of Agur as a foreign or Hebrew agnostic is related to the theory of Agur’s atheism as expressed in his negation of God. The view of Agur as an atheist presents an extremely negative approach to a personality who negates God’s function in the created world. Moreover, this

\(^{358}\) Lipiński, “Peninna,” 74.
\(^{359}\) Dillon, *The Sceptics*, 133, 136
\(^{360}\) Ewald, *Die Salômonischen*, 248.
\(^{361}\) Torrey, “Proverbs,” 95.
theory is not proclaimed by someone who is foolish or wicked (cf. Ps 14:1) but by someone who claims to be wise and, at the same time, able to neglect God’s influence on humanity.

It is quite remarkable to note how scholars have shifted their theories about Agur from the towering biblical figure of human wisdom embodied by Solomon, through different characterizations of Agur’s intellectual capability and faith, to a theory of his skepticism, agnosticism and, finally, atheism. The difficulty of v. 1 has, thus, precluded any definitive identification of Agur.

Based on the provocation of the anti-religious statement in Prov 30:1, in the following chapters, the author of Proverbs 30 will develop a dispassionate correction of his apparently acquiescent (v. 1c), self-denying and subservient position toward the proclaimer of ungodliness (cf. הוּס in v. 2), his religious background (v. 4), his personal faith (v. 5), his direct warning (v. 6), and his prayer for the remedy of the religious, social and moral disorders (Prov 30:7–17) with the concomitant moral deviation and social abuse (Prov 30:18–23), in which morality can be reestablished and social injustice eliminated only by self-correction and self-control, in keeping with one’s proper social status (Prov 30:24–31).
CHAPTER THREE:
DENOTATION, CONNOTATION AND DICTION IN PROVERBS 30

The writer of Proverbs 30, like the authors of Job, Qoheleth and Psalms, often moves from the denotative meanings of words to create fresh ideas and images. To comprehend the intention of the author of Proverbs 30, it is necessary to study the literary meanings of the lexemes (denotations). The denotative meaning is regularly related to a certain word or sentence context, suggesting new connotations related to the word or syntagmas, which can suggest figurative language, personification or metaphor. This chapter will present the denotations, connotations and alternative readings of the lexemes, phrases and clauses in Proverbs 30. The range of the language used is enriched by the diction and accentuation, which indicate the style of the literary unit or material. Every translation of poetry, whether from an ancient or modern language, to a non-sister language cannot be literal but requires certain lexical and contextual adaptations, which elucidate the literary richness of the poetic language, as is the case with Proverbs 30.

1a The noun דִּבְרֵי is in the plural construct form here and should not be identified as an independent word or as the definition of many “different sayings” but rather as a

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1 The plural is regularly translated as “words,” sometimes with and sometimes without the article (“The words...” or “Words...”). The LXX instead of דִּבְרֵי reads — דְבָרַי (the words),” cf. 1 Sam 15:11; 1 Kgs 8:59) as the common noun pl. constr. with the pron. suff. 1 ms. The Syr utilizes the common partitive case with the definitive article (Agur’s matters.”) The Vg and Tg follow the Hebrew word דִּבְרֵי: verba (the words”). The common masculine plural construct form of דְבָרִים occurs without the article. Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 95), relying on the LXX translation, takes the Hebrew lexeme as דְבָרַי (“my words”).

2 Thus Toy, Commentary, 517.
retronym with its possessive genitive (cf. Exod 12:41; 22:7), which gives a special meaning to the construct form (“the matters” or “things of commitment”). The word דָּבָר has many meanings, although the LXX, Syr, Tg, Vg and other later and modern translations retain the general meaning as “words” or, more precisely, “sayings.” Here, the lexeme could simply refer to “the things,” “portion” or “part of something,” and ultimately “the matter” (cf. “the matters of Solomon” in 1 Kgs 11:41), which would not be in construct only with the following verb אָגוּר but presumably with the item אָגוּר, which delimits the first syntactical unit of the long clause. The construction בִּן־יָקֶּה is in apposition, while אָגוּר and the definite state אָגוּר remain in syntactical correspondence, forming the main clause in the first syntactical unit of the sentence: “The matters of …”

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3 Instead, Murphy (*Ecclesiastes*, 1–2) makes the distinction between “The words of Qoheleth in Qoh 1:1 (also in Prov 30:1 and 31:1) and “the words of Solomon in 1 Kgs 11:41); cf. BDB, 128.
4 Cf. GKC, §15 h.
Even though the most common interpretation of the lexeme ḣภг is as the personal name Agur, the root גור can be also understood as a verb: “become perplexed, be afraid” or “become disturbed.” In the MT, the verb appears only in the Qal forms and is used mostly for a condition of fear of false prophecy—תָגוּר (Q. impf. in Deut 18:22), fear of false deliberation—אָגוּר (Q. impf. in Deut 32:27; Prov 30:1), fear of false worship—וּגוּר (Q. impf. in Hos 10:5) or fear of authority—יָגוּר (Q. impf. in 1 Sam 18:15 and Job 41:17). Besides these uses, the verb can also refer to the fear of God—גור (Q. imper. in Ps 22:24 or Q. impf. in Ps 33:8 and Job 41:17) or the fear of God’s punishment—גור (Q. imper. Job 19:29). The conjunctive accent Mērēkēt marks the prolongation of the last syllable and the word’s relation with the following construction. The LXX probably rightly reads the root גור of the word אָגוּר, translating it not as a noun but rather with the verbal form of φοβέω. It is not necessary to emend the verb, since גור is here in the Qal impf. 1 ms of the root גור with the meaning “to become perplexed,” “disturbed.”

6 All ancient translations understood the word אָגוּר differently. Here, the LXX probably reads the Pi’él imper. 2 ms גור (“fear!” cf. 1 Chr 16:30) or the Qal impf. 2 ms גור of the same verb (cf. Deut 18:22; Ps 32:8; Fichtner, in the BHS apparatus, 1315; Franklyn, “The Sayings,” 239), whereas the Vg reading of the Qal part. pass. ms of the verb גור wrongly translates the word (from collected things to one who is collecting and, thus, the “collector”) as a active participle (cf. Sauer, Sprüche, 94). Michaelis’ proposal (Johann David Michaelis, 95) is also based on the Vg גור or גר as the Qal imper. 2 ms—“gather!” Leonhard Bertholdt (Historisch-kritische Einleitung in sämtliche kanonische und apokryphische Schriften des alten und neuen Testament [Erlangen: Johann Jacob Palm, 1815/1816]) 5:2193) understands the lexeme similarly and reads it as “Weisheitsforscher” (searcher of wisdom). The Syr and Tg follow the Hebrew letters אָגוּר: אַגּוּר (cf. Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 352; Müntinghe, Die Sprüche, 71). In addition, Midrash Mishle explains the personal name of Agur as “one who girded his loins for wisdom” and, thus, derives חייר from חָגוּר part. pass. ms of גור (“be girded,” cf. Visotzky, The Midrash, 117). Furthermore, the lexeme גור in Prov 30:1 could also be read as גור of גור in the Qal impf. 1 ms (“I sojourn,” cf. Exod 12:48). Based on this occurrence in Exod 12:48, Sauer (Sprüche, 94 and n. 11) detects the origin of the word as a South-Semitic (Altsüdarabische) proper name. Bar Bahluh homiletically explains the name as the pseudonym of Chiefs of wisdom” (cf. T. K. Cheyne, “Agur,” EBDB, 1:89).

7 Cf. Miller, A Commentary, 508: “The verb is… to turn out of the way. And this turning out of the way for danger is a prudent and innocent characteristic of fear. Agur therefore means 1-fear.”
“appalled” or “feel fear,” “terror” and ultimately “become disturbed.”

The verb also might be used not in formal but mostly in gentilic or colloquial speech, where the expression יָגוּר would emphasize the personal consternation that accompanies public scandal. Thus: “I became disturbed…”

The noun בֵּן in the construct form is ordinarily בֶּן, rarely בִּן. The use of בִּן is attested only four times in the MT (Deut 25:2; Jon 4:10 [bis] and Prov 30:1). The genitive construction בֶּן denotes an inalienable perpetual relationship (cf. Bertholdt, Historisch-kritische Einleitung, 2193), rather than an alienable possession as a generic claim of ownership (like “my opinion”). The construction בִּן may correspond to the noun נַעַר (“youth”) in Qoh 10:16 (cf. Qoh 9:17–18; 10:5–6), with the allusion “that incompetent people have gained ascendancy.”

The noun בְּנִי in the construct form is understood both of them as appellatives. Instead of the construct noun בֵּן it reads בְּנִי (“my son,” as does Michaelis, Johann David Michaelis, 95) and takes the following word not as the construct form but as בְּנִי or perhaps בְּנִי (cf. Gen 48:9; Jäger, Observationes, 215), the concluding Qal imper. 2 ms with the suff. 3 mp of יָגוּר—“receive them!” (Michaelis, Johann David Michaelis, 95 reads יָגוּר, Qal imper. 2 ms of יָגוּר—“take” and links the imperative with its object בָּנִי). Instead, the Vg reads the verb קיא here and translates יָקֵא, which is the Hiph ±îl impf. 3 ms apocopated in a construction with בְּנִי used here as a participle (“he vomits” → “one who is vomiting” → “vomiter.” Cf. Jonah 2:11). The Syr and Tg identify the proper name as יָקֶּה, which can also refer to a disciple (cf. Michael Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic [Ramat-Gan, Baltimore and London: Bar Ilan University Press/The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002] 231). Martin Noth (Die Bewährung von Salomos “göttlicher Weisheit,” [VTSup 3; Leiden: Brill, 1955] 225–37, here 228) reads here the Arabic root wpq: “sich hüten” (beware of). Sauer (Sprüche, 96) also views this lexeme as a South Arabian proper name with the Ugarit root qwy: “Der Erhoffende” (the hoper). Midrash Mishlei offers another solution here: לֹא בֵּן (“a clean son [from sin].” cf. Visotzky, The Midrash, 117). Shemôt Rabbah 6:1 takes בֵּן as בָּנִי and reads בָּנִי אָגוּר (“to gather understanding”). Saadiah Gaon sees יָקֵא as a synonym of the word יָגוּר and reads it as יָגוּר (“assemblage,” cf. Ginsburg and Weinberger, Mishlei, 617). Grätz (“Exegetische,” 433) suggests the possibility of reading יָגוּר ("Gebieterin") and reads “der Sohn der Gebieterin” (the son of the mistress). Murphy (The Tree of Life, 25) sees in the Hebrew root יָגוּר an acronym of יָרוּ הָוֵי (“the Lord, holy is he”), while Miller (A Commentary, 509) comparing the root יָר (“the pious one”) with “Christ,” translates the lexeme as “Godly.”

8 BDB, 158–59.

9 The LXX emends items יָקֵה and understands both of them as appellatives. Instead of the construct noun יָגֵר it reads יָגוּר (“my son,” as does Michaelis, Johann David Michaelis, 95) and takes the following word not as the construct form but as בְּנִי or perhaps בְּנִי (cf. Gen 48:9; Jäger, Observationes, 215), the concluding Qal imper. 2 ms with the suff. 3 mp of יָגוּר—“receive them!” (Michaelis, Johann David Michaelis, 95 reads יָגוּר, Qal imper. 2 ms of יָגוּר—“take” and links the imperative with its object בָּנִי). Instead, the Vg reads the verb קיא here and translates יָקֵא, which is the Hiph ±îl impf. 3 ms apocopated in a construction with בְּנִי used here as a participle (“he vomits” → “one who is vomiting” → “vomiter.” Cf. Jonah 2:11). The Syr and Tg identify the proper name as יָקֶּה, which can also refer to a disciple (cf. Michael Sokoloff, A Dictionary of Jewish Babylonian Aramaic [Ramat-Gan, Baltimore and London: Bar Ilan University Press/The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002] 231). Martin Noth (Die Bewährung von Salomos “göttlicher Weisheit,” [VTSup 3; Leiden: Brill, 1955] 225–37, here 228) reads here the Arabic root wpq: “sich hüten” (beware of). Sauer (Sprüche, 96) also views this lexeme as a South Arabian proper name with the Ugarit root qwy: “Der Erhoffende” (the hoper). Midrash Mishlei offers another solution here: לֹא בֵּן (“a clean son [from sin].” cf. Visotzky, The Midrash, 117). Shemôt Rabbah 6:1 takes בֵּן as בָּנִי and reads בָּנִי אָגוּר (“to gather understanding”). Saadiah Gaon sees יָקֵא as a synonym of the word יָגוּר and reads it as יָגוּר (“assemblage,” cf. Ginsburg and Weinberger, Mishlei, 617). Grätz (“Exegetische,” 433) suggests the possibility of reading יָגוּר ("Gebieterin") and reads “der Sohn der Gebieterin” (the son of the mistress). Murphy (The Tree of Life, 25) sees in the Hebrew root יָגוּר an acronym of יָרוּ הָוֵי (“the Lord, holy is he”), while Miller (A Commentary, 509) comparing the root יָר (“the pious one”) with “Christ,” translates the lexeme as “Godly.”

family but is translated here not as “the son” but rather as “the Youth,” who succeeds his father. The Maqqēph stroke links two words, and “in respect of tone and pointing they are regarded as one with only one accent,” here the disjunctive Rēbhi‘a ʿgādōl, which acts as a strong pre-tone to ʿōlē wēyōrēd. Since יָנָא replaces יָנָא here, it could also hint at the particle conjunction יָנָא as the negation of the following verb יָנָא in participial form with the meaning “to be on guard,” “to obey” or “to observe (that which was commanded by God)” or “to be careful of the religious duties,” or simply “to be pious.” The form of the verb יָנָא is adjectival here in the masculine singular, like יָנָא ("beautiful") in Qoh 3:11, and means “one who observes,” describing a concrete person with the title “Observer” (of that which was commanded by God). Thus, the Youth (יפ) of one who claims to observe what was commanded by God could be assumed to be someone who otherwise does not (יפ) observe what is commanded by God (cf. Judg 18:25). However, the meaning of “the Youth of the Observer…” matches the context well, which in apposition directs the message to the main point: “I became disturbed by the interpretation of the matters of the Youth of the Observer.”

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11 The proper name “Benjamite” in the MT is usually יָנָא (cf. Judg 3:15; 2 Sam 16:11; 19:16; 1 Kgs 2:8) or יָנָא in Ps 7:1. Instead, in 1 Sam 9:1 there is the gentilic Kēthib form יָנָא and in 9:21 the compound noun יָנָא (cf. GKC, §96).
12 Cf. GKC, §15h.
14 Cf. BDB, 429; Delitzsch, Commentary, 261.
15 Cf. BDB, 429; Miller, A Commentary, 509; Delitzsch, op. cit., 261.
16 The verb that precedes the construction may suggest a critique (cf. Bickell, 293) of a reputable member of society who behaves improperly. The utilization of the euphemism יָנָא could allude to the royal court (alongside the other royal motifs in Proverbs 30) or a family that observes the Law more as a requirement of their social status than out of genuine personal commitment. The disturbed person instead could be one of the advisers, counselors or sages who makes an accusation regarding apostasy. The possibility of a prophet or prophet’s proclamation against an ungodly matter is excluded here because the prophecy openly launches a message against the king (cf. the prophet Ahijah against the king Jeroboam in 1 Kgs 14:1–18 or Elijah against Ahab in 1 Kgs 21:17–
The word מַשָא with the definite article and accent for the main division of the verse should be examined in the following way. The noun has a twofold meaning: the first is the personal name מַשָא as the son of Ishmael in Gen 25:14 (cf. 1 Chr 1:30), the second is more common in the MT and denotes a “burden” in a very literal way and in a more figurative way. The Hebrew word in both the literal and metaphorical meanings is the same, מַשָא.

The LXX descriptively reads the Hebrew lexeme as καὶ δεξάμενος αὐτοὺς μετανόει ("and receiving them repent!"), which would be equivalent to the Hebrew הִנָהֵם וְשָאֵם (cf. Grätz, "Exegetische," 432) that Jäger (Observationes, 220) understands as the LXX’s interpretation of the Hebrew קַחְמַשָא — "nim den göttlichen Spruch an" (accept the divine saying!). The Vg has the noun visio, while the Syr and Tg interpret the word theologically as נַבּיָה דַעָל or נבֵיָה דַעָל ("received the prophecy"). Hiller (Institutiones, 143 and Index n. 5) translates the compound as "gestatio, adsumptio vel discipline acceptio" ("bearing, receiving or acceptating the discipline"). Grotius, Vogel, and Doederlein (Ad Librum Proverbiorum, 432) see a simple noun, συλλογή, here with the meaning of “collection” (cf. 1 Sam 17:40). Midrash Mishlei, following the Syr מַשָא and Tg כיושב, reads "divine inspiration" (cf. Ginsburg and Weinberger, Mishlei, 617). Similarly, Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 95) translates the word as “gottlichen Spruch” (the divine saying), whereas Grätz ("Exegetische," 345), Bickell ("Kritische," 293), and Cheyne (Job and Solomon, 149) emend the final mem into lem— "Spruchdichter" (proverbial poet). Doederlein (Sprüche, 182) sees in the word the concept of Spruchsamlung or Analogie of an interview. In this regard, Hensler (Erklärungen, 280) insists on reading מַשָא as a solemn saying by Agur or “Ein feierlicher Ausspruch.” De Wette (Die Sprüche, 392) euphemizes the word prophecy with the definition of “die schwere Worte” (severe [difficult] words). Gemser (Sprüche, 79), in view of the article מַשָא, thinks that the subject מַשָא is an “Ausspruch” introducing a simple sentence lacking a predicate and object. For this reason, Gemser adds מַשָא — “den er tat” ("that he did"); cf. Num 23:7, 18; 24:3, 15.

Cf. Exod 23:5; Num 4:32; 2 Kgs 5:17, 8:9; 1 Chr 15:22, 27; 2 Chr 20:25, 35:3; Neh 13:15, 19; Jer 17:21, 22, 24, 27.

Diversity in the translation of the Hebrew lexeme is reflected by the LXX and Vg. For the literal meaning, the LXX uses either the noun γόμος ("cargo," cf. Exod 23:5; 2 Kgs 5:17) and βάσταγμα ("burden," cf. Neh 13:15, 19; Jer 17:21, 22, 24, 27) or the verb αἴρω ("rise," "take up," cf. Num 4:32; 2 Kgs 8:9; 2 Chr 20:25; 35:3). The Vg similarly uses the noun onus, or the pl. form of ponds ("burden," "weight," cf. Exod 23:5; 2 Kgs 5:17; Neh 13:15, 19; Jer 17:21, 22, 24, 27) or the verb portare ("to bring," "to pick up," cf. Num 4:32; 2 Chr 20:25; 35:3). The figurative meaning of the Hebrew מַשָא in the LXX is remarkably wide. Unlike the literal meaning, the LXX uses the
The emendation of this frequent biblical word נӳפֵּי to the unknown hapax נӳפֵּי (“from Massa”)\(^\text{21}\) or סְפֵּי (“Massaite”)\(^\text{22}\) seems highly implausible.\(^\text{23}\) The word נӳפֵּי appears only twice in the Book of Proverbs. In both cases (30:1 and 31:1), the Vg utilizes the noun *visio*, which only appears here as the Latin translation of the Hebrew נӳפֵּי. In a similar manner, the LXX in Prov 31:1 uses a new noun χρηματισμός (“petition,” “judgment,” “statement” or “answer”),\(^\text{24}\) while in Prov 30:1 it looks as though the word נӳפֵּי has been understood as a construction of the main noun λόγος: τοῦς ἐμοὺς λόγους and δεξάμενος αὐτοὺς μετανοεῖ (“these my words... which presume acceptance and repentance...”). The diversity in the usage of the same noun נӳפֵּי in ancient and modern

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\(^\text{21}\) Cf. Muehlau, *De proverbiorum*, 8; Grätz (“Exegetische,” 434) also proposes reading a compound that is in the plural, “die Israeliten in Messa.”


\(^\text{23}\) Cf. BDB, 966 and 429.

\(^\text{24}\) LSJ, 519.
translations shows the capacity of this Hebrew lexeme to be modified and adapted. There is no doubt that the lexeme מַשָא is a Hebrew polysemantic word that can be taken literally (“cargo,” “burden”), figuratively (“duty”), theologically (“oracle”) or even abstractly (“statement,” “notion,” “idea” or Hochspruch25 and Kundmachung26). Thus, it would be incorrect to construe the noun only literally or only metaphorically. Likewise, it is incorrect to see in the lexeme only a divine utterance or oracle, since the word allows a general or public statement but also a private and personal one as well (contra Wildeboer).27 Given the LXX’s and Vg’s broad spectrum of interpretations of the word, it is preferable to understand the Hebrew noun מַשָא as a terminus for perception, understanding, statement, thesis, hypothesis and commitment, but also for true divine prophecy on the one hand and profane human interpretation about sacred things on the other. In this regard, it seems that the best definition of the lexeme מַשָא with the determinative article has been offered by Jeremiah himself: …וֹהַמַשָא יִִֽהְיֶּּֽה לְאִּיש דְבָר… “the definitive statement will become every man’s word” (23:36).28 Although the noun is usually not used with the article, except when it is followed by the demonstrative

26 Schulz and Strack, Die Psalmen und die Sprüche, 386.
27 Wildeboer (Die Sprüche, 84) notes that מַשָא “kann nur das Orakel, den Ausspruch bedeuten”—“can only mean the oracle, the saying.”
28 The temptation to look for some other meaning for the Hebrew lexeme מַשָא, adding the preposition (מִמַשָא) or emending the suffix (הַמַשָאִי), seems needless because the word itself offers many morphological variations (from noun to verb to adjective) with many different meanings. If the lexeme מַשָא has to be subjected to emendation, then it should be taken from the noun שֵׂח or שׂיח—“conversation,” “occupation” or “thought” with the pronoun conjunction מ, i.e., מָה שֶׂח or מָה שֶׂיח—“his thought.” The morphs ה and mem could easily undergo metathesis from מ to מ and with the final ’aleph and suffix hō could have caused an emendation to the acceptable compound מַשָא (cf. Ada Yardeni, The Book of Hebrew Script [London: The British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2002] 167–79). Nevertheless, scholars have proposed other different emendations. The most famous is one proposed by Hitzig (p. 282), who renders the lexeme מַשָא as “the kingdom of Massa.”
pronoun (cf. Isa 14:28; Ezek 12:10) or by a relative clause (Isa 22:25; Hab 1:1; cf. Conant, 128 n. 6), the definite article in Prov 30:1 determines the concrete and definitive statement and, thus, the noun מַשָא with the determinate article הַ coupled with the construct form of the preceding noun דִּבְרֵי should be translated as “the words regarding the personal judgment.”29 In addition, the personal judgment is “the interpretation” of the religious matters, which will be defined as “blasphemy” in v. 8. The complete translation of the first clause is as follows: “I became disturbed by the interpretation of the matters by the Youth of the Observer.”

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29 Doederlein (Sprüche, 183) thinks that the article refers to the compilation of the literary work chosen by a compiler that together with the noun מַשָא can be called “the anthology.” Herder (Herders sämtliche Werke, §169) sees in the article with the noun מַשָא the totality of Agur’s (whose name means “der Sammler”) exposé—“Spruchsammlung Agurs,” and thus in his translation uses the plural form “Machtreden” (the powerful speeches). Instead, Hensler (Erklärungen, 280) attributes the article with מַשָא to the personal name יָקֶה, reading it יְקָהָה (“obedience,” cf. Prov 30:17). Similarly, Barucq (Le livre des Proverbes, 220) holds that the article of מַשָא here is a reduplication of the final hē’ of יָקֶה. Hitzig (“Das Königreich, 279) also fuses the initial hē’ of מַשָא with the preceding יָקֶה, reading יְקָהה—“gehorsam sein” (“be obedient”). Keil (Sprüche, 418) in the article sees the link between the introductory segments in Proverbs 30 with developed details in Proverbs 31, while Richter (“Agur,” 419) takes the article as part of he interrogativum translating it as “Kann jemand sagen?” (can anybody say?). Steinmann (Proverbs, 586) considers the article as the evidence for the “(only) divine revelation that Agur received” in the entire Proverbs 30.
The noun נְאֻּם is frequent in the MT and regularly in a construction with another word, mostly with a personal name such as נְאֻּם יְהוָה or נְאֻּם הָאָדוֹן יְהוָה. The theological character of the lexeme is prevalent in the Bible, although there are places where נְאֻּם does not have a theological, but rather the technical meaning of a personal statement. In Num 24:3 (alongside 24:15), the word נְאֻּם in the construction with the personal name as a title נְאֻּם בִּלְעָם (“Bil‘am’s announcement”) followed by נְאֻּם הַגֶּבֶּר (“the man's announcement”) hints at the “master’s announcement,” as well as in 2 Sam 23:1 a title נְאֻּם דָוִּד (“David’s announcement”) followed by נְאֻּם הַגֶּבֶּר (“the man’s announcement”).

The LXX translates the construction as a dependent clause: τάδε λέγει ὁ ἀνήρ (“this says the man”), where the demonstrative pronoun τάδε shows the segue of the previous τούς ἐμοὺς λόγους (“my words”). Thus, the LXX translates the Hebrew noun נְאֻּם as the verb λέγει in the ind. pres. act. 3 sm and ἀνήρ as ὁ ἀνήρ (“the adult man”). The Syr interprets the Hebrew expression נְאֻּם הַגֶּבֶּר with the relative clause ﻋﺎﻣا تر ﻧا ﻧد ﻳا لـ (WHO RECEIVED THE POWER). Instead, the Tg opens a new clause here, ﻋﺎم ﻧا ﻧد ﻳا ﻧد (AND THE MAN SAID). The Vg, for its part, understands the construction as a part of the preceding noun visio (נְאֻּם הַגֶּבֶּר) and translates: (visio) quam locutus est vir (“to speak”) and the subject of the noun vir (“adult man”) in the nominative singular represents the equivalent of נְאֻּם הַגֶּבֶּר. Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 95) sees the determinate noun der Mann here. While Michaelis renders the previous lexeme מַשָא göttlichen Spruch, Doederlein (Sprüche, 138) finds in the word נְאֻּם a prophetic utterance and in the genitive נְאֻּם הַגֶּבֶּר a synonym for a prophet and translates it as “ein Gottesspruch des Propheten” (a divine word of the prophet). Schelling (Salomonis regis, 136–37), comparing the root גֶּבֶּר with Aramaic and Syriac, emends word to a noun in the feminine singular, i.e. coniux (“the spouse,” the wife in this case) and translates: Effata Aguris oracular que locutus est coniux Ithielis, Ithielis, inquam et Uchalis (“Agur’s formula of the oracle said to (his) wife Ithiel, to Ithiel as well as to Uchal”). Cheyne (“Ithiel and Ucal,” p. 2295) views the construction as referring to an additional work of the Qoheleth and reads נְאֻּם הַגֶּבֶּר (“words of a guilty man”). Kamphausen (Sprüche, 385) descriptively renders this construction: “Es lautet des Mannes Spruch” (it is proclaimed the saying of man). Ewald (Die Salōmonischen, 250), instead of the noun נְאֻּם reads נָאַם here as the Qal pf. 3 ms of נאם (“utter prophecy”) and translates it as “(Der Hochspruch) welche sprach” (the saying, which was proclaimed by…). On the contrary, Lipiński (“Peninna,” 75) proposes the noun “athlete” here and translates: “Oracle de l’Athlète pour Ithiel” (“the oracle of the Athlete for Ithiel”), cf. 1 Kgs 4:13. 19.

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32 Samuel Terrien (The Psalms: Strophic structure and Theological Commentary [ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003] 1:314) links the noun נְאֻּם with the Arabic ﺭاءـ (to mutter).
suggests the “king’s announcement.” Unlike the aforementioned examples, the word with an indefinite common noun occurs only once in Ps 36:2 as נְאֻם פֶּשַע, with a negative nuance: “the plan of transgression,” and in Jer 23:31, וַיִּנְאֲמוּ נְאֻם (“and they launch an announcement”), as an object in a construct clause. The word נְאֻם here in Prov 30:1b corresponds to the following negative context of the concept לְאִִּֽיתִּיאֵל and provocative ungodliness in following verses. Thus, נְאֻם in Prov 30:1b should be understood, not as “announcement” but rather as “provocation” (cf. Ps 36:2; Jer 23:31). The noun גֶּבֶּר, in a construction with נְאֻם, might be understood not simply as a common noun, “man,” correlated with the more common איש, but rather as a terminus technicus for someone who has higher status and importance in society: “lord,” “sir” or “master.” The noun נְאֻם, although it opens a new syntactical structure in the verse (subject-predicate-object) is related to the preceding דבר (cf. the LXX translation; Clifford, Proverbs, 260), and the noun גֶּבֶּר in the definite state refers to the previous בִּין-יָכֶה concept. The terminus technicus of someone who announces not a divine oracle or false oath or his own “testimony,” “judgment,” but the “provocation” by someone else is summarized in one word: לְאִִּֽיתִּיאֵל. Thus, the translation of the construct would be as follows: “This is the master’s provocation.” The difficulty with reading the parallel couplet of v. 1 as “The

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33 It is not implausible to envision a development of the earlier terminus technicus for higher social status in the term נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר to the later official terminus theologicus of God’s proclamation with נְאֻם יְהוָה.
34 The statement on Prov 30:1 suggests the nobility and important status in society of a person who is generally called “the Youth who is observing (what was commanded by God).” This will be explained at length in the exegetical part of this dissertation.
35 The MT uses the definite article, even when the subject is unknown and indefinite (cf. Ps 34:9; 40:5; 52:9; 94:12; 127:5; Jer 17:5.7).
words of Agur...” Oracle of the man...” (see Chapter One of this dissertation) lies in the perception in which we do not see the switching of persons from 3 ms in v. 1 to 1 ms in v. 2 but, rather, the same person in 1 ms is also talking in v. 2f., referring to the provocation expressed by only one word, לאיטא interleaved. Thus, there is no “oracle” mentioned in Proverbs 30. Moreover, it is not a “provocateur” who speaks in Proverb 30 but, rather, one who is provoked by a provocateur.38

Here, lamed could represent the preposition or the first letter of the construction. The

38 Comparison of the testimony in Prov 30:1 with those of Lord Bil’am and King David supports the suggestion that the author of the chapter is a member of a noble family.

The ancient translations have differently understood the Hebrew לאיטא interleaved. The LXX translates it as a complete clause (subject-predicate-object): ἐκ τῶν πιστεύων θεόν (“to those who believe in God”) that would be equivalent to the Hebrew לאיתיאל, finding here the Hiph’il impf. 3mp of בא (“from whom God is”), the Qal part. pass. mp as “those who are kept by God” (cf. W. A. Wright, “U’cal,” 1586). Instead, Cheyne (“Ithiel and Ucal,” p. 2295) translates the LXX phrase as the Hiph’il part. act. mp בא לאיתיאל that suits the MT, except that ‘איל stands for the second mem and is translated as “to those who believe in God.” Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 352) parses לאיתיאל as בא לאיתיאל (“to those with whom God is”) and this is how the Vg understood the construct, which it renders as cum quo est Deus (“with whom God is”), i.e., instead of the understanding of the personal pronoun in the 3 mp, בא is in the 3 ms as בא לאיתיאל. On this basis, some later scholars read לאיתיאל (“God is with me”) (cf. Menahem ha-Me’ir, Book, 616; Ewald, Die Salômonischen, 250; Miller, A Commentary, 509; De Wette, Die Sprüche, 392). The Syr transliterates and adapts the Hebrew construct as a proper name with the dative of direction, לאיתיאל (“to Itiel”). The Tg does the same לאיתיאל (“to Ithiel”). Theodotion’s Greek found in the Hebrew construct the noun δοματίας from לאיתיאל (“the power”), which is later adopted by Grätz (“Exegetische,” 435), who reads לאיתיאל (“man without strength”). The Midrash Mishlei comprehends the construction as לאיתיאל (“the letters of God”), which a man, divinely inspired, understands (cf. Ginsburg and Weinberger, Mishlei, 617). In a similar way, Toy (Commentary, 519) mentions the reading לאיתיאל as possibly deriving from לאיתיאל found in Neh 11:7, meaning “precepts of God.” One of the first emendations of the Hebrew construction לאיתיאל, which has become common for modern scholars, is found in the Hebrew Merzbacher Collection of the year 1340 (cf. Katorowsky, Ein anonymer, 38), where the commentator, eliminating the first palindrome, reads the second one as לאיתיאל (“I have toiled,” from לאיתיאל in the Hiph’il pf. 1 ms (“weary,” “exhausted,” “incapable,” “toiled.” Cf. Prov 26:15; Isa 7:13; Jer 12:15). Three centuries later, a similar emendation was also proposed by Coccejus (Operum Johannis Cocceii, 85), who translated the first element as a proper name, not as Ithiel but as Leitiel, and the second one as the verbal clause לאיתא (“I am wearied, God”) see the note in Chapter One. Cf. Muehlau, 5 n. 3, Kennicott and De Rossi, Notes, 484; see also Zigler, op. cit. 353). In later studies, this emendation has become a cornerstone of the modern interpretation of the Hebrew expression לאיתא interleaved. Thus, Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 95, as well as Kennicott and De Rossi, op. cit., 484; Zigler, op. cit., 353; Münzinghe, Die Sprüche, 69) translates לאיתא as לאיתא, the Hiph’il pf. 1 ms of לאיתא: “Ich verschmacht über Gott” (“I languish over God”). Hensler (Erklärungen, 282) finds here לאיתא the Pi’el pf. 1 ms of לאיתא—“Ermüdet hab ich Gott” (“I tired God”),
The most common understanding is that the contracted characters אִיתִּיאֵל comprise a proper name with lamed as the preposition of direction: “to” or “toward Ithiel.” Instead, there are other possibilities for comprehending the construct form. The LXX and Vg already noted the name אלה (“God” in the construction, which is in relation to the verb that follows, whereas the Syr and later the Tg and Midrash take the form as a proper name.40

The construct form of יהִיָּאֵל (cf. Neh 11:7) suggests a coalescence of two or even three lexemes in phonemic overlap (לְאִּיתִּיאֵל: Bickell, Gemser…) or an elision to create an euphonic effect (לְא יִּתי el: Michaelis, Ziegler), disambiguation or a phonetic blending (לְא יִּתי el: Scot, McKane, Lelièvre and Maillot) or an acronym (לְא יִּתי el: Torrey).

40 However, it looks as though, besides the name of God, the Aramaic existential particle

and Bertheau (Die Sprüche, 168) as יהִיָּאֵל in the Niph’al pf. 1 ms of יהִיָּאֵל—“Ich habe mich abgemüht” (“I tired myself”). These scholars’ proposals had their shortcomings. In fact, Michaelis (op. cit., 95) abruptly translated “über Gott habe ich mich bemühet, in fact referring to יהִיָּאֵל, whereas Ziegler, followed by Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59) and Bertheau, translated the noun אלה as the vocative אלה (“O, God!”). The same idea of reading יהִיָּאֵל was broadly accepted by Jäger, Hitzig, Geiger, Muehlau, Stuart, Zöckler, Bertheau, Schulz, Strack, Horton, Wildeboar, Frankenberg, Delitzsch, Baumgartner, Sauer, Martin, Knabenbauer, van der Ploeg, Ringgren and Zimmerli, Schneider, Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, Scorlack, Clifford, Longman, Perdue, Barthélemy, Waltke, Franklyn, Vigin, Strömburg Krantz, Fox and Sæbø. Rashash (cf. Ginsburg and Weinberger, op. cit., 616) rendered the syllabification of the MT’s יהִיָּאֵל as אלה יתי לא (“God is meaningless to me”). Fichtner (in the BHS, 56*) also reads a conditional clause: אלה יתי לא (“O that God were with me”). Instead, Cox (Proverbs, 240) sees a relative clause here: יהִיָּאֵל (“One who has no God”). Although Yael Reshef (“The Modern Hebrew Asyndetic Relative Clause: The Rise of a New Syntactical Mechanism,” FLH xxvi/1–2 [1984] 115–34) recognizes the asyndetic relative clause only in Modern Hebrew, Strömburg Krantz (“A Man,” 549), choosing the alternative proposed by Cox, reads here an asyndetic relative clause, יהִיָּאֵל (“[Man] not supported by God”). Bickell (“Kritische,” 293) also prefers a relative clause here and reads יהִיָּאֵל (“[Ausspruch des Mannes] der sich um Gott abgemüht (den Kopf zerbrechen) hat” (from יהִיָּאֵל “[Saying of the man] who struggled with God [up to breaking the head]”). Bickell’s idea is followed by Gemser and Plöger (Sprüche, 354), who also read as follows יהִיָּאֵל יהִיָּאֵל—“der sich um Gott abgemüht” (“who struggled with God”). Cheyne (“Koheleth,” 2686 n. 1) upholds the relative clause here interpreting it as a later additional emendation work of Qoheleth’s original authorship and reads: יהִיָּאֵל יהִיָּאֵל—“(The words) of a guilty man (called) hak kōhēleth.” Dahood (Proverbs and Northwest, 57) understands the construct form as a derivation of the Ugaritic verb י’y (“to prevail”) and translates: “I, El, prevail.”

40 Instead, the Merzbacher Collection (Katorowsky, Ein anonymer, 38) changes the lexeme יהִיָּאֵל into יהִיָּאֵל to express human toiling (v. 1) and successful accomplishment of knowledge about holy things (v. 3).
which is equivalent to the Hebrew ישׁ "there is" or "it exists" is present in the construction. In addition, the Aramaic existential particle is junctural and can involve many varieties. Targumic Aramaic used the aforementioned particle with the negation לא as a contracted elision, לאית, which is derived from לא אית toward לאיתו. Although the negation לא occurs six times in the MT (Ezra 4:16; Dan 2:10, 11; 3:25, 29; 4:32), its haplography לאיתי "as negativing single words" due to the inconsistent Biblical Aramaic vowels may be only detectable in Prov 30:1. On the basis of the Proto-Semitic and later Targumic contraction of syllables, it is possible to conjecture the existential negation לאאיתו (lāʾ₂t-tây). In the unstressed open syllable, the short vowel a was reduced to šewāʿ and ʿalef was completely lost in the pretonic syllable and working backward (cf. katāb > kʿtab; malīk > mʿlīk). After the dropping of ʿalef, the gāmes remains weak and unstressed, whereas the long t, which is usually indicated by the hīreq with a mater lectionis, remains unchanged here. The last vowel, pāṭah, followed by yōḏ, became an anaptyxis, where "the loss of a short final vowel produces a cluster of consonants, whereas an anaptyctic vowel [i] is inserted between the two consonants to resolve the cluster (the form kʿṭābit in Targum Onqelos can be

42 GKC, §152 a 1.
44 According to Barth-Ginsburg’s Law, the preformative ya in the Proto-Semitic imperfect form yaktāl changes into yi.
explained as follows: *katabtu > katabt > katabit > katabít > katábít*.

“This anaptyctic vowel soon became a full vowel (cf. *malku > mallk > mal[i]k; katabtu > katabt > katab[i]t*).

The insertion of the theophoric element הַאָל, where םּוֹגֶל is replaced by סֶרֶה, is due to the conjunction with the existential negation (as in the Hebrew construct עַדְיִמְיָא). Thus, the existential negation רַאָאִיתַי (lā-ʾi-táy ᵕל) with the noun נְקֵיָא was reduced to רַאָאִיתִּיָא (lā-ʾi-táy-ʾel). Furthermore, the first long syllable preceding the already long and stressed ʾי was contracted, whereas the final and short vowel ʾע between two consonants became an anaptyxis and was changed into a long ʾי with the *mater lectionis רַאָאִיתִּיָא* (ʾitiʾel).

The haplography רַאָאִיתִּיָא is so well suited to the Masoretic text of Prov 30:1 that for centuries it was explained as a proper name with the *lamed* of direction. However, the solution to the construction רַאָאִיתִּיָא probably lies in the realization that its phonetic and morphological form in ancient Hebrew represented not a proper name but rather an Aramaic neologism made by the proclaimer of ungodliness himself, which was used in an inappropriate act of insulting denying God's sovereignty (cf. the Greek construction βλασφήμεω, from βλάπτω—“I injure” and φήμη—“reputation”). This also explains the usage of the Aramaic not as a “crypto” language (thus Torrey, “Proverbs,” 95) but rather as an Aramaism. Thus, here the Aramaic

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47 Ibid.


49 Torrey (“Proverbs,” 95–96) proposed the theory that the original Hebrew manuscript used a distich as לאָנִי אֵל וְאוּכָל לאָנ כִּי אֵל, which a later theologian editor translated into Aramaic, reading it as follows לאָנִי אֵל וְאוּכָל לאָנִי אֵל and thus saving “this now-famous chapter for the sacred book.” McKane (Proverbs, 645), following Dalman, thinks that Torrey’s theory is implausible due to the fact that the pronominal suffix of the ms of רַאָאִיתִּיָא is not used in the Bible. (cf. G. Dalman, Grammatik des Jüdisch-Palästinischen Aramäischen: nach den Idiomen des palästinischen Talmud und Midrasch, des Onkelostargum und der jerusalemisohen Targume, Aramäische Dialektproben (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1981) 108; Franz Rosenthal, A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic, 45, §95.
haplography לְאִּיתִּיאֵל denotes an original word that was created, developed and pronounced in Aramaic. The term for denying the God recognized by the state as the sovereign ruler over Israel would be לְאִּיתִּיאֵל (cf. the Greek ἄθεος: ἄ—“not” and θεός—“God”). Thus, the apostrophic announcement of the ungodly definition לְאִּיתִּיאֵל does not offer a prophetic or public explanation, but rather an apostrophe of the personal statement and determination about Israel’s religion. Thus, the existential clause here should be understood as a apostrophe that concludes the verse with a composite noun, which, instead of acknowledging God’s sovereign authority, לְאִּיתִּיאֵל, negates the God of the people of Israel and reads as לְאִּיתִּיאֵל, which might be translated as “Ungodliness!” (Germ. Ungott).

A close similarity to the term לְאִּיתִּיאֵל may be found in the phrase רָע לְהִּתְעוֹלֵל (“to practice wickedness,” cf. Ps 141:4; cf. Prov 30:20), which also refers to malignant behavior in society. Thus, the second sentence of v. 1 denotes a private attitude and announcement about the official religion, which is not only blasphemous (thus Torrey, “Proverbs,” 93f.) but rather apostetic to the listener and scandalous to the society: “This is the master’s provocation: —Ungodliness!”

51 Cf. מְזָרַע אֱלֹה or מְזָרַע אֱלֹהִים (“ungodliness”) in Deut 32:17; Jer 5:7; 2 Chr 13:9, or מְזָרַע (“unrighteousness”) in Jer 22:13 or מְזָרַע (“helplessness”) in Job 26:2. Cf. GKC, §152, a 1, n. 1; cf. also GKC, §152, a 1, n. 1.
The meaning of this form is identical with the previous one: לְאִיתִּיאֵל, with the only difference that here the complex word opens a new conditional clause as an *exclamatory phrase*, which could be a logical reason for its repetition. Here, the conditional clause is without an introductory particle in the *casus pendens protasis* clause, followed by *wāw apodosis* in the following word (cf. Gen 34:38; Exod 21:36; Num 5:12,14). The conjunctive *Mūnah* connects the protasis and apodosis, while the *Dēhi* indicates a pre-tone to the *Sillīq* in the short conditional clause. The translation of the protasis is as follows: “(If) ungodliness!?”

The common understanding of the lexeme אֵלָה is a proper name. However, the verb אֵל, the LXX and Syr understood the *palilologia* of לְאִיתִּיאֵל as a *lapsus calami* and do not translate the second element, whereas in the Vg the additional element is translated as a dependent clause in apposition to מהש *qui Deo secum morante*—“who, with whom God stays…” or “who, being with God (is fortified),” which would reflect the Hebrew לאו אֵל לְאִַיִּיתִאֵל, The Tg repeats the term as the proper name לאיתיאל. The Merzbacher Collection (Katorowsky, *Ein anonymer*, 39) reads the second להאתיי as Hiph ±îl inf. const., which it links the verb אוכל with v. 3: “I can comprehend the knowledge of God” because לְאִּיתִּי אֵלוֹנָךְ חָרָם אֲשֶּר (“I was able to toil about it”). Regarding the first composite of אֵל לְאִֵיתִי, Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 95) understands the second element as an *antanaclasis* and reads it as אֵל לְאִֵיתִי, where אֵל (Aramaic אבל) is understood as a particle preposition: “concerning,” “on account” or “regarding,” which translates as the noun as “die Untersuchung” (“the examination,” or “probe,” cf. BDB, 41). Geiger (*Urschrift*, 61) reads the first construction as a Piel in a declarative sentence (see above), but the second as an interrogative clause in the Niph'al pf. 1 ms לאוי אֵל and translates: “Müht' mich vergeblich ab um Gott?” (“Did I struggle about God in vain?”). Grätz (“Exegetische,” 343) reads the second לאוי with the conditional prefix וה: לאו אֵל אַיִּיתִי (“O that God would be with me!”). For Bickell (“Kritische,” 293), the direct speech begins with the second לאוי אֵל אַיִּיתִי, which should be read as לאוי אֵל אַיִּיתִי (“I have toiled for nothing”). Cheyne (“Ithiel and Ucal,” p. 2295) compares the element with the Aramaic Nabatean personal name לאוי, which may be understood as “Bel exists” or Akkadian Ili-itti (“Eli is here,” cf. Gesenius, “לְאִיתִּיאֵל,” 1:51). Böttcher (Neue exegetisch, 35), relying on Job 24:25, wrongly places the particle of negation לאו after its subject and predicate לאוי, reading (“I toiled for nothing”). Lipiński (“Peninna,” 74) found the verb לאוי in the Qal pf. 1 ms with the Proto-Semitic adverb לאוי (“mighty,” “power”) and translates: “Je suis fort puissant” (“I am very powerful”). Cox (*Proverbs*, 240) sees a 3 ms in the first construction, whereas he reads the second as 1 ms and translates: לאוי אֵל (“I have no God”).

52 The LXX and Syr understood the *palilologia* of לְאִיתִּיאֵל as a *lapsus calami* and do not translate the second element, whereas in the Vg the additional element is translated as a dependent clause in apposition to מהש *qui Deo secum morante*—“who, with whom God stays…” or “who, being with God (is fortified),” which would reflect the Hebrew לאו אֵל לְאִַיִּיתִאֵל, The Tg repeats the term as the proper name לאיתיאל. The Merzbacher Collection (Katorowsky, *Ein anonymer*, 39) reads the second להאתיי as Hiph ±îl inf. const., which it links the verb אוכל with v. 3: “I can comprehend the knowledge of God” because לְאִּיתִּי אֵלוֹנָךְ חָרָם אֲשֶּר (“I was able to toil about it”).

53 Cf. GKC, §§159 i and 143 d.

54 Cf. GKC, §15 g–h.

55 This is the most problematic appellative in v. 1. Although the Syr and Tg understand this word as a proper name, the LXX takes it descriptively, translating it with the verb παύω (“stop,” “cease,” “hinder,”), not as a...
occurs in Chapter 30 three times (vv. 14, 17 and 20)\textsuperscript{56} and refers to consumption by humans. In addition, the verb אכל, together with the noun אוכל, is found in more than 140 terms in the MT.\textsuperscript{57} The prevalent forms here are the Qal imperfects and perfects with part. but as a pres. midd. 1 ms, קא פֹּדְךָ that corresponds to the Hebrew כָּל לֹא אֶכְּלֵנִי ("become weak," "afraid"). The Syr does not read Hebrew כָּל לֹא אֶכְּלֵנִי as a proper name but instead emends it into כָּל אֶכְּלָנִי and translates אָכְלָנִי ("and he declared to Ithiel"), which would correspond to Hebrewไล אִיתִי לְאִתִּיאֵל ("to Ithiel and said") with the verb in apodosis. The Vg reads the Hebrew construct not as כָּל אֶכְּלָנִי but כָּל אֲכַל (from כָּל אְכַל) "be able to," "endure," "have power to" in the Qal impf. 3 ms [cf. Hos 12:4] and understands כָּל אֲכַל as a complex sentence with a dependent clause: כָּל אֲכַל וָאֵכֶּל לְאִּיתִּיאֵל ("One with whom the Lord is who, being with God, is confortatus [fortified]"). In this regard, Gemser (Sprüche, 79) suggests reading the last compound as כָּל אֲכַל—"and siegte" ("and I won"). The Vg, similarly to the Syr, inserts an additional ait, which assumes כָּל אֲכַל (wayyiqtol) opening the quoted or direct speech (The Hebrew syntax wayyiqtol of the verb אכל in the Vg is regularly translated as et ait). Theodotion also reads כָּל אֲכַל here and translates כָּל אֲכַל ("I am able," cf., Cartwright, Commentarii, 1262, Jäger, Observationes, 216; Miller, A Commentary, 509; De Wette, Die Sprüche, 392).

\textsuperscript{56} The Midrash (cf. Katorowsky, Ein anonymer, 39 n. 6) emands here כָּל אֲכַל, the Qal 1 sm of כָּל אֲכַל and reads "because he is able to stand by the knowledge of the holies." In the same manner Grätz ("Exegetische," 342) retroversו כָּל אֲכַל into Hebrew as כָּל אֲכַל and translates: "I would be able." Similarly, Ewald (Die Salomonischen, 250), comparing the root כָּל אֲכַל with the verbal form found in Job 31:23 (יכל Qal impf. 1 ms), translates: "and I am strong" (cf. forms of כָּל אֲכַל in Menahem Zevi Kaddari, A Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew [in Hebrew; Ramat-Gan, Bar-Ilan Univ. Press, 2007] 426). Geiger (Urschrift, 61) sees here not a wāw consequitum ("and") but a wāw comparativum ("so that," cf. Prov 25:3) in the interrogative clause in the Qal impf. 1 ms derivative כָּל אֲכַל from the same verbal form כָּל אֲכַל and reads "…wie soll ich es vermögen?" ("how shall I be able?"") Cf. BDB, 407; Torrey, "Proverbs," 95). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 353), on the contrary, adopting the same verb כָּל אֲכַל, composes the sentence from the negative perspective with the analogy of Exod 7:21 and Jer 20:9 כָּל אֲכַל ("I could not stay") and translates "und schweige!" ("and be silent!"). A very similar approach is offered by Bickell ("Kritische," 293), who, to the same root, adds the negation לֹא כָּל אֲכַל here (cf. Job 31:23), linking the verb with the verbal subject (כָּל אֲכַל) and translates: "und es nicht vermocht" ("and it is impossible"). Scott (Proverbs, 176) as well as Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I Proverbi, 602) does the same and translate: "I can (not know anything) or I desist." In contrast to the aforementioned authors, Aquila reads here παύομαι as the subj. aor. act. 1 ms of παύομαι ("I have ended"), and Michaelis' translation of the lexeme כָּל אֲכַל is on the same basis, which could be understood in two ways: as the verb in futurum apocopatum of כָּל אֶכְּל ("complete," "at an end," cf. Kadari, A Dictionary, 510; Böttcher, Neue exegetisch, 35; Stuart, Commentary, 405) in the Qal: כָּל אֲכַל (thus Kamphausen, Sprüche, 385; Kautzsch, Sprüche, 380; Bertheau, 168; Delitzsch, 271; Franklin, 244; Clifford, Proverbs, 259; Longman, Proverbs, 515; Fox, 850; cf. Wildeboer, Die Sprüche, 85, who vocalizes differently: כָּל אֲכַל) or Niph'al כָּל אֲכַל impf. 1 ms as סֶבֶּה (Sprüche, 359) reads: wā נְקָל: "in fatigue and research on God I have faded away," and the future consecutive כָּל אֲכַל Pi'ēl impf. 1 ms as "I ended, forsaking the investigation" (likewise Zigler, 353; Hensler, 282; Böttcher, 35).

\textsuperscript{57} Kennicott and de Rossi (Notes, 484), based on the Hebrew verbal construction כָּל אֲכַל ("I have done speaking") in Gen 18:33 and the Vg additional verb ait in Prov 30:1 understood by them as a dropped infinitive of the Hebrew form כָּל אֲכַל in Prov 30:1 translate the same construction of the verb כָּל אֲכַל synthetically in the Pi'ēl impf. 1 ms כָּל אֲכַל ("I'm exhausted"). Based on the Kennicott Bible, which in its apparatus instead of the inverse כָּל אֲכַל has
three different functions: a literal function for human eating, an emphatic function for animals or things (such as a “sword”), and a metaphorical function. The literal function has the general meaning of “to eat.” The emphatic translation usually would be “to devour,” and the metaphorical meaning, regularly negative and with the noun אֵש (“fire”) always means “incinerate,” especially with the nouns רָע (”briers,” cf. Isa 9:17), רָע (”thorns,” cf. Isa 10:17) and יִש (”stubble,” cf. Isa 33:11), which reinforces the meaning of “to disappear into nothingness” here. In its other metaphorical uses, the verb means “exterminate,” “annihilate,” “fade away” or “disappear.” The verbal form אֵל is mentioned in Exod 3:2 as a “participle Pu’al without the preformative (ש’).” Prov 30:1 contains the construct יִשָּׁל that we repoint to יִשָּׁל (cf. Isa 30:24; Qoh 9:12) as a participial form of the verb אכל with the metaphorical meaning of consumption. The literal meaning column of the verb אכל in the table below only presents the participial forms of the verb found in the MT, thereby avoiding a multitude of other verbal occurrences in the MT. The emphatic function, on the other hand, is presented completely, as is the metaphorical function of the verb אכל to demonstrate its different meanings in the MT.

the jussive אוֹל or Jäger’s solution of אוֹל (Observationes, 216), Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 70) assumes the verb כל (“make complete”), reading כל as את in the impf. of the Hiph’al 1 ms and translates: “ich bin abgestumpft” (“I am jaded”). Hitzig (“Das Königreich,” 282) offers the same idea vocalizing the verb as the jussive אוֹל in the Qal impf. 1 ms of כל: “und ich war stumpf” (“I was dull”). Sauer (Sprüche, 98) finds here the Ugarit verb לָי (“be able”) and translates: “dass ich es könnte begreifen” (“that I could understand it”). In addition, the Veneto-Greek has καὶ συνήσωμαι here (cf. W. A. Wright, “U’cal,” 1586), the ind. fut. med. 1 ms of συνίσῃ (“to understand”) that in Hebrew would be אוֹל Qal impf. 1 ms of ב (cf. Job 9:11) and read it as “and I will understand.”

58 GKC, §52s; cf. Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 310
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<td><strong>Hosea</strong></td>
<td>1:7 Q. pt. (incinerate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:14 Q. pf.</td>
<td>1:20 Q. impf. pass. (disappear)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:6 Q. pf.</td>
<td>5:24 Q. inf. (incinerate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>13:8 Q. impf.</td>
<td>9:11 Q. impf. (exterminate)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Joel</strong></td>
<td>9:17 Q. impf. (incinerate)</td>
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<td>1:4 Q. pf. (3x)</td>
<td>10:17 Q. pf. (incinerate)</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:25 Q. pf.</td>
<td>24:6 Q. pf. (annihilate)</td>
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<td><strong>Amos</strong></td>
<td>26:11 Q. impf. (incinerate)</td>
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<td>4:9 Q. impf.</td>
<td>29:6 Q. pt. (incinerate)</td>
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<td>7:2 Q. inf.</td>
<td>30:27 Q. pt. (incinerate)</td>
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<td><strong>Nahum</strong></td>
<td>30:30 Q. pt. (incinerate)</td>
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<td>1:8 Q. inf.</td>
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<td>9:15 Q. pf.</td>
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<td>11:9 Q. impf</td>
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<td><strong>Malachi</strong></td>
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<td>48:45 Q. impf. (incinerate)</td>
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<td>4:11 Q. impf. (incinerate)</td>
<td>15:4 Q. pf. (incinerate)</td>
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<td>15:5 Q. pf. (incinerate)</td>
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<td>15:7 Q. impf. (incinerate)</td>
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<td>19:12 Q. pf. (incinerate)</td>
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<td>19:14 Q. pf. (incinerate)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>21:3 Q. pf. (incinerate)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>23:25 Niph. impf. (incinerate)</td>
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</table>
Metaphorical meaning

Ezekiel
28:18 Q. pf. (incinerate)
36:13 Q. pf. ( exterminate)
36:14 Q. impf. ( exterminate)
42:5 Q. impf. ( reduce, term. tech.)

Hosea
5:7 Q. impf. ( annihilate)
7:7 Q. pf. ( incinerate)
7:9 Q. pf. ( reduce, term. tech.)
8:14 Q. pf. ( incinerate)

Joel
1:19 Q. pf. ( incinerate)
1:20 Q. pf. ( incinerate)
2:3 Q. pf. ( incinerate)
2:5 Q. pf. ( incinerate)

Amos
1:4 Q. pf. ( incinerate)
1:7 Q. pf. ( incinerate)
1:10 Q. pf. ( incinerate)
1:12 Q. pf. ( incinerate)
1:14 Q. pf. ( incinerate)
The active participle of the verb הָנָךְ is regularly translated as “one who eats” or “eater,” while the participial passive form of the same verb would be translated as “one who is eaten” or “consumed.” If the participial passive form of the verb הָנָךְ has a metaphorical
function, then it would be translated as “someone or something that is consumed to nothingness” or “completely disappeared.” This synthetic reasoning fits well with the last lexeme of Prov 30:1. The verb אכל in the Book of Proverbs functions, first and foremost, as part of a cause-effect expression, which, on the basis of the preceding statement leads to a resultative or final statement. The verb points to a metaphorical meaning here and could be understood as a *metalepsis* or colloquialism in the poetic expression of general human mortality or the negation of existing things. The resumptive wāw demonstrates the apodosis of the previous protasis clause as an invasive and assertive conjunction here and cannot be regarded as *jussive* in this context (Jäger *Observationes*, 216; Müntinghe, *Die Sprüche*, 70 and Hitzig “Das Königreich,” 282 see here *jussive*). The translation of the apodosis is “then even less, nothingness.” Thus, the clauses in the protasis and apodosis would be read as follows: “If ungodliness, then even worse: —Nothingness!”

In Prov 30:1, the translators took different syntactical approaches. The Vg links v. 1 and v. 2 with the auxiliary verb ait, which introduces the direct speech of vv. 2–4. The Midrash (cf. Visotzky, p. 117) and Merzbacher Collection (cf. Katorowsky, *The Midrash*, 38) associate the sentence לְאִּיתִּיאֵל וְאֻכַּל as a part of דַעַת קְדֹשִׁים אֵדָע of v. 3. This is why the unknown author of the *Merzbacher Collection* commentary on Proverbs is one of the first who emends לְאִּיתִּיאֵל to הלאיתי (“I have toiled”) to link it with the earlier Midrashic of לאוּכַל (“and I am able”) and to read this as “I have toiled but now I am able (v. 1) to

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59 Generally, the verb אכל in Proverbs has two functions. The first one is deductive cause-effect: “earned dish” (1:31 Q. impf.); happiness as the result of proper behavior (13:2 Q. impf.); “righteousness” that leads to well-being (13:25 Q. part.); good or bad as the fruit from the inside of man (18:21); false friendship that leads to trouble (23:7-8 Q. imper. + Q. pf.), the respect of another that gives honor (27:18 Q. impf.); ungodliness that leads to nihilism (30:1 Q. pt. pass.), and poverty that comes from idleness (31:27 Q. impf.). The second function concerns the physiological goodness of food (24:13 Q. imper.; 25:16 Q. imper.; 25:21 Hiph. imper.) and negative effects of overeating (25:27 Q. inf.).
comprehend the knowledge of holies” (v. 3). Toy instead suggests reading two different titles: “The words of Agur Ben-Yakeh” and “Inspired utterance of the man to Ithiel, to Ithiel and Ukal.”

Bickell, followed by Gemser, thinks that 'אתייאל ל'אתייאל לאקעל does not narrow down the subject ל'אתייאל, but rather provides additional information about it. If ל'אתייאל is a gloss here, as Richter (“Hielt Agur?” 419 n. 8) claims, what would happen with the other parallels in v. 1? If there is a reason to eliminate the glosses in v. 1, then it should be done completely, eliminating ל'אתייאל as the synonym of 'געברא and the homonym ל'אתייאל (see the structure in Chapter 3 of this dissertation). There is no lexical justification to read v. 1 partially or to eliminate eventual glosses or even emend composed lexemes because the cohesive parallels presuppose one another, creating a cause-effect solution: “if so…”then…”

Four sentences in a close syntactical chain create an accelerating movement from the initial statement (דִּבְרֵי) toward the peripatetia (וְאֻכָל) and complication (לְאִּיתִּיאֵל) to the conclusion and outcome (וְאֻכָל). The first two clauses are independent, while the last two are dependent on the second, whereas the second repeats and specifies the first. The verb אָגוּר creates a verbal quotation subject, which determines its oblique object (דִּבְרֵי הַמַשָא 'געברא), whereas the objective genitive (הַגֶּבֶּר 'געברא) functions as an agent of the object. “I became disturbed by the interpretation of the matters of the Youth of the Observer.”

The second clause depends on the first and specifies the main idea of the verse, which is “ungodliness.” The subject in the second independent clause (נְאֻם) with its object (הַגֶּבֶּר) constitutes the incomplete structural phrase, where the particle (determinative adjective: “this”) and the predicate (verb: “is”) are intrinsic to

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60 Toy, Commentary, 518–19.
62 The quotation subject in the first clause contains the main verbal constituents of the syntax. Indeed, the syntactical unit is opened by the verbal form “I was disturbed” and concluded by the verbal clause “(it is) nothingness.”
63 Umbreit (Philologisch-kritischer, 392), and Ewald (Die Salômonischen, 250) synchronize the lexemes and ל'אתייאל into a relative clause (see their translations in Chapter One).
the nominal clause. The definition \( \text{לְאִּיתִּיאֵל} \) ("ungodliness") derives from the phrase \( \text{אֶל} \text{לָא} \text{אִּיתַי} \) ("there [is] no God"), where the negative particle phrase \( \text{לָא} \) presupposes the predicate as its subject. The following definition includes the conditional phrase "if + \( \text{אֶל} \text{לָא} \text{אִּיתַי} \)" with the concluding statement: "then, even more, there is + \( \text{אֻכָל} \)."

According to the syntactical composition, the structure of v. 1 is as follows:

\[
\text{דִּבְרֵי׀ אָגּוּר בִּן־יָקֶֶּה הַמַַּ֫שָ֥א}
\text{נְאֻֻ֣ם הַַ֭גֶּבֶּר לְאִִּֽיתִּיאֵֵ֑ל}
\text{לְאִִ֖יתִּיאֵֻ֣ל}
\text{וְאֻכִָֽל}
\]

Translation of v. 1:

*I became disturbed by the interpretation of the matters by the Youth of the Observer*

*This is the master’s provocation: —Ungodliness!*

*If ungodliness, then even worse: —Nothingness!*

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64 According to Conant (*The Book*, 127) “the dative of the one addressed, after \( \text{נאם} \) is nowhere else followed by the indirect object;” cf. Mühlau, *De proverbiorum*, 3.
Hebrew syntax acknowledges many meanings of the particle conjunction כִּי.\textsuperscript{66}

Originally a demonstrative particle, it may be used in a causal clause but can also open

\textsuperscript{65} The LXX takes the particle conjunction emphatically as the introduction to the following motive clause with the superlative adjective: ἀρνητικά γὰρ “for.” (Cf. interpretation as a motive clause in Delitzsch, \textit{Commentary}, 272). A similar introduction to v. 2 is also offered by Delitzsch, \textit{op. cit.} 272; cf. Ringgren and Zimmerli, \textit{Sprüche}, 114; Torrey, 95; Scott, \textit{Proverbs}, 175; McKane, \textit{Proverbs}, 646; Cox, \textit{Proverbs}, 239; Clifford, \textit{Proverbs}, 259, as well as Fox, 850. By contrast, the Syr opens a new sentence with the causal clause Δξύνω plus the particle כ—“because of,” as does the Tg יְא א. Similarly, Bunsen (\textit{Vollständiges}, 198) follows this causative interpretation “denn,” “for” or “because.” In Busen’s line are also Frankenberg, \textit{Sprüche}, 160; Kamphausen, \textit{Sprüche}, 386; Bertheau, \textit{Sprüche}, 168; Frankenberg, \textit{Sprüche}, 160; Schulz and Strack, 386; Oesterly, \textit{Proverbs}, 267; Barucq, \textit{Le livre des Proverbes}, 220; Scorahlick, \textit{Sprichwörter}, 1255; Steinmann, 589, as well as Sæbø, \textit{Sprüche}, 359. The Vg translates the Hebrew כ as the emphatic asseverative introductory particle without any particular meaning. In this line, Hitzig (“Das Königreich,” 284) explains that the particle כ here “ist einfach die Partikel des Grundes” (“is simply the particle of the statement,” cf. Isa 15:1). In addition, Toy (\textit{Commentary}, 521) thinks that particle follows “some statement of the ground” of the following text that has been corrupted, and thus the particle “for” should be simply ignored. Berthold (\textit{Historisch-kritische}, 2193, as well as Keil, \textit{Sprüche}, 416; Ewald, 250; Conant, 79; Geiger, \textit{Urschrift}, 62; Schneider, \textit{Sprüche}, 159 and Plaut, \textit{Proverbs}, 300) follows the same pattern of interpretation and explains “dass wie das Lateinisch imo... häufig zur steigernden Vorsicherung dient und im Anfange des Satzes steht” (“the particle, like the Latin prefix imo..., is often used as a reinforcement of assurance and comes at the beginning of the sentence”). Mühlau (\textit{De proverbiorum}, iv–vi), in support of this arrangement, explains: \textit{Ubi quum כ causativam vim habere non posset, affirmativam ei tribuerunt interpretes. Non autem recte ut nosib quidem videtur, judicaverunt. Nam particular כ ubicumque affirmative nostro “ja” respondet, aut non ordiendae inservit orationi sed apodosis initium facit [cf. Jes. 7,9. Gen. 31,42. 1 Sam. 14,39] (“When כ cannot assume a causative function, then an affirmative interpretation is attributed to it. They do not do so, correctly however in our view (interpreting it only in a causative way), for the particle כ corresponds everywhere to our (German) affirmative ‘yes’ but the prayer is not formulated in an ordinary way but starts with the apodosis [cf. Isaiah 7:9; Gen 31:42; 1 Sam 14:39]).

\textsuperscript{66} The study of the particle כ in the MT by A. Schoors asserts the same emphatic function of the particle כ in Prov 30:2 (cf. A. Schoors, “The Particle כ,” (\textit{Remembering All the Way ...} \textit{OTS} 21; Leiden: Brill, 1981) 240–76, here 243). Moore (“A Home,” 99,” as well as Whybray, \textit{Proverbs}, 408) translates the emphatic particle here with “surely,” while Müntinge (\textit{Die Sprüche}, 58) also sees an emphatic particle here that in translation can simply be ignored. In the same line scholars such as Koptak (\textit{Proverbs}, 651) and Ross (\textit{Proverbs}, 1119) do not translate the particle at all. Franklin (\textit{The Sayings}, 244, as well as Meinhold, \textit{Sprüche}, 494) translates the particle here as “actually.” Böttcher (\textit{Neue exegetisch}, 35, as well as Plöger (\textit{Sprüche}, 354) reads here the temporal “dann” (“then”). The same is done by Gemser (\textit{Sprüche}, 79), but Sauer (\textit{Sprüche}, 98) rejects this proposal, claiming that the particle כ “ist hier nicht Zeitpartikel mit Nominalsatz (Gemser), sondern das aus dem Ugaritischen bekannte emphatische k” (“כ is here not a temporal particle with a nominal clause (Gemser), but, from Ugaritic, the well-known emphatic k”). In line with these two transition possibilities, Lipiński (\textit{Peninna}, 75; cf. idem, \textit{Semitic Languages Outline of a Comparative Grammar} [OLA 80; Leuven: Peeters, 1997] nr. 56, 3; 58, 2) explains the Ugaritic k or ky as follows: one temporal, the other emphatic (which is usually non translated), taking the particle in Prov 30:2 as a concessive כ and translates: “bien que” (“although”). A similar translation was already proposed earlier by De Wette (\textit{Die Sprüche}, 392), who found here an exception כ reading: “Zwar” (“although”). The same understanding is shared by Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (\textit{I proverbii}, 599), who translate the particle as “pur” (“although”). Richter (“Agur,” 420) understands vv. 2–3 as conditional speech and translates the particle as “angenommen” (“supposing”
temporal, emphatic or asservative and objective, circumstantial or resulting clauses, interposition in a construct chain, interposition of a superlative and even a conditional clause or a concessive clause (cf. Prov 23:13–14). It may introduce the apodosis of a conditional preposition, alone, or in the combinations กิ ‘ז (Job 11:15; 22:26) and กิ ‘ט (Job 3:13; 4:5; 6:3; 21; 7:21; 8:6; 13:19). After the “provocation” by the assertion of “ungodliness,” the author of Proverbs 30 expressed “nothingness” as the consequence and final result of ungodliness and now tries to give solid arguments for the anthropological and eventually transcendental consequences of the exposed ungodly statement. Thus, besides proposing ungodliness (יהוה) and concluding nothingness (וֶאֱלֹהים), the author opens essential anthropological arguments with the circumstantial clauses in vv. 2–3 against the ungodly provocation, which is concluded with the transcendental cosmological questions in v. 4 and the author’s final statement in v. 5f. In this regard, with the particle י the author opens the first circumstantial clause, accelerating the ungodly argument with the consequential aftermaths, using here the י of the consequence, with concessive force, which should be translated as “subsequently,” “furthermore,” “all the more,” or “moreover” (cf. Gen 20:10; Job 5:18, 31:11; Qoh 9:12; Mic 7:8; Zech 9:5). The conjunctive accent מֶהֶפִּקָּה creates a segue into the new sentence: “Subsequently…”

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69 David J. A. Clines, Job 38–42 (WBC 18B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011) 1206 n. 3h; GKC, §156f.
The adjective בַעַר with the meaning “without mind” could be derived from the noun בְעִיר ("cattle"). In the MT, the noun בְעִיר always has a positive meaning and is regularly presented as a part of a household (cf. 1 Sam 15:3; 14; Jer 3:24; Jon 3:7), wealth (cf. 2 Sam 12:2; 14), offering to God (cf. Deut 16:2; 1 Sam 15:15; 2 Sam 24:22; 1 Kgs 8:5; 1 Chr 21:23; 2 Chr 5:6; 7:5; 15:11), consecrated thing (cf. 2 Chr 29:33) or conquered spoil (cf. 1 Sam 22:19; 27:9; 30:20). Thus, the most probable root of the adjective would be בַעַר ("to burn"). The Hebrew verb בַעַר has various meanings. It seems that the primary meaning of the root בַעַר is "to burn." From this original definition, similar but modified meanings, such as “to consume,” “to ruin,” “to demolish” or “put to ruin” are derived. The verb also acquired colloquial meanings, such as “be mindless” or “senseless like a beast.” The adjective בַעַר joined with the noun כסל frequently has the colloquial meaning of the root בַעַר. The noun כסל can have the positive metaphorical sense of “confidence” (cf. Job 8:14; 31:24) as well as the negative sense of “stupidity” (Ps 49:14; Qoh 7:25). By contrast, the root בַעַר has more of a perfective aspect, with the meaning “to burn” and finally “to consume,” “destroy.” The “fat-minded” (כסל) is not the same as the “burnt-minded” (בער). It is possible to reanimate the “fat-minded” but “burnt” or “consumed-minded” is a

70 See the footnote 76.
73 Cf. Joachim Schüpphaus, "כסל,” TDOT 7:266.
definitive state. It might be, however, that because of its ambivalent meaning, the verb בער or the adjective בער is frequently associated with the related noun כסיל (cf. also אוִּיל in Prov 13:16; 16:22; 27:22; בַעַר in Prov 14:18.24; 15:2.14; 16:22; 17:12 and in Prov 1:22; 2:2; 8:5; 9:4), which additionally explains the real meaning of this usually comparative expression, denoting rather those people who are unrepentant or remorseless (בַעַר), or those who can repent or return to the right path of life (כסיל). Thus, the adjective בער has to be translated with a pejorative resonance regarding human intelligence, which could be identified with a sheep, ox or mule (cf. Ps 32:9). English also has such expressions that abusively demean human dignity, such as “bestial,” “subhuman” and “brutal,” which are in absolute opposition to the כסיל (“human intellect”). The conjunctive strong accent Mūnah marks the close relation between the stressed word and the following lexemes. The translation of בער here is “a being without mind.”

76 The LXX, as mentioned previously, utilizes here the emphatic superlative ἄφρονέστατος of the adjective ἄφρον (“weak minded,” cf. Prov 10:18). The Vg is close to the LXX translation with its superlative statissimus (“the most stupid”). The Tg by the Aramaic particles of separation ...ב(... emphatically expresses the noun בורה (“the wild”) and the construct בני נשא (“men”), reading בני נשא דבורה (“one of the wildest men,” cf. Rosenthal, A Grammar of Biblical Aramaic, §29; §48). The Syr, by contrast, has a less expressive construction ("I am deficient in," cf. Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 97) reads this lexeme as an adjective “(ein) unwissender” (“an ignorant”). In a similar manner, Geiger (Urschrift, 62) chooses the adjective "unwissend"— "unknowledgeable." Herder (Herders sämmtliche Werke, 126) also reads the Hebrew word as an adjective "ein einfältiger (Mann)" (“a simple man”), as does Plaut (Proverbs, 300) who has "I am brutish," while Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 353) and Ewald (Die Salōmonischen, 250) see here a comparative: "ich bin dümmer als..." (“I am dumber than...”), as does De Wette (Die Sprüche, 392) who reads “verständiger als andere Leute” (“more reasonable than the other people”). Similarly Steinmann reads (Proverbs, 589): “I am (more) stupid,” while Hensler (Erklärungen, 283) adopts the superlative expression: “höchst unvernünftig” (“the most unreasonable”). Bertheau (Die Sprüche, 168) and Frankenberg (Sprüche, 160) descriptively translate the lexeme as “ein unvernünftiges Tier” (“an irrational animal”) and Meinhold (Sprüche, 494) translates the noun as “ein Vieh” (“a cow”). Richter (“Agur,” 420) reads that a conditional clause with the meaning “wäre schwerfälliger” (“if I were cumbersome”) is presented here.

77 The Croatian language has a similar colloquialism that is used, especially in the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to curse someone who, after a serious warning, behaves improperly and is called “hajvan” or “afvan” (“animal”) a term that regularly refers to a sheep, ox or mule.
The personal pronoun אָנָּא is the default pronoun of “self-denial,” thus expressing social subordination to the speaker of “ungodliness” in v. 1. According to Revell, the default pronoun אָנָּא “is used by individuals with a perceived advantage when speaking to someone of the same or lower status, whereas אָנָּא is the default pronoun for those of lower status when speaking to someone of higher status. Usage departing from this default conveys specific social and discourse information” (cf. Ruth 2:10–11). אָנָּא, the longer form of the personal pronoun, is rare in Proverbs, occurring only in 24:32 and 30:2. In both cases, the subject “I” voices self-denial or humbling before a speaker or listener. Thus, in Prov 30:2 the meaning is emphatic (as in Prov 24:32), where humbling does not pertain only to the subject “I” but includes the necessity of the wider self-denial of society and the humbling of emphasized egoism. In this sense, “I” can also represent “you,” “he,” “we,” “they” or everyone in society who is subjected to a socially highly positioned individual. The מִנָּה again marks the close relation of the pronoun אָנָּא with the following compound מֵאִּיש.

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78 The LXX has the personal pronoun εἰμί, as do the Vg (sum) and Tg (Ké), while the Syr does not utilize the personal pronoun אָנָּא (“I”) or its emphatic form אָנָּא (“he”) as the emphatic conjunction אָנָּא (“same”) and reads אָנָּא אָנָּא אָנָּא ("[I am deficient of] the same [human] mind.” Cf. J. F. Coakley, Robinson’s Paradigms and Exercises in Syriac Grammar [5th ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1981] 16).

The compound מֵאִֵ֑יש consists of the particle preposition מִּן meaning “from” or “of” and אִּיש, which is used here as a collective noun with the principal meaning of “male” or “man.” The particle מִּן in the construction with אִּיש in the MT regularly serves as a particle of separation: woman from man (Gen 2:23), a male congregation from a female congregation (1 Chr 16:3; Neh 8:2), the living from the dead (Josh 6:21 and 8:25; 1 Sam 15:3 and 22:19), the opposition between pious and wicked people (2 Sam 22:49; Pss 14:49; 43:1; and 140:25; Prov 2:12 and 19:22; Qoh 7:5) or sinners from the righteous (Ezek 45:12). In addition, the construction denotes two or more parties that should be separated from one another. Thus, in Isa 52:14 and Prov 30:2, the privative min of physical separation is presented. The physical separation in Isa 59:14 acknowledges the person who is “so distorted (as by fire) as to appear hardly human.”

The person of Prov 30:2 is presented as without human understanding, without a

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80 Here, the LXX uses the genitive of separation, πάντων ἀνθρώπων (“[I am the most weak-minded] of all humans”). The Vg, in a similar manner as the LXX, translates the Hebrew construction with the superlative and genitive of separation virorum (“[I am the most stupid] of men”). The Tg, doubling the partitive particles וּנְבֵית דְּבֵרוּת דָּבָר, also reads the construction as a superlative: “(one) of the wildest of the humans,” while the Syr simply leaves aside the genitive construction. Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 97, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 353; Ewald, 250; Lipiński, “Peninna,,” 75; Richter, “Agur,” 420; and Steinmann, 591) sees in the particle מִּן the Hebrew comparative: “ich bin dümmer als irgend ein Mensch” (“I am dumber than any man”). By contrast, Geiger (Urschrift, 62, as well as Wildeboer, 85; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 160; Toy, Commentary, 520; Schneider, Sprüche, 159; Franklyn, 244; Plöger, Sprüche, 354; Meinhold, Sprüche, 494; Garrett, Proverbs, 235; Whybray, 408; Moore, 100; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 310; Leeuwen, 248; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 850; Sæbø, Sprüche, 359) does not see a comparative in the particle מִּן but rather a privative: “bin ja unwissend ich, kaum Mann [für einen Mann]” (“I am really ignorant, hardly a man [for a man]”). Herder (Herders sämmtliche Werke, 126) views the construction מֵאִֵ֑יש as an estimative emphatic expression that includes humanity in general. Gemser (Sprüche, 79, as well as van der Ploeg, Prediker, 100; Torrey, 95; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 114, Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 159) also understands the particle as an opening of the emphatic statement, while Delitzsch (Commentary, 272, as well as Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 599; Clifford, Proverbs, 259) argues for the negative particle מִּן that should be translated as “not a human.”

81 The noun also denotes the distinction between an adult and גֶּבֶּר (“young man”) as well as an adult and זָקֵן (“old man”) or man and אִּשָה (“woman”). Cf. Nicolaos P. Bratsiotis, מֵאִֵ֑יש, TDOT 1:223.

mind. The disjunctive accent athnāh marks the principal division of the first half of the verse and, together with the preceding conjunctive accents, closes the sentence. This relation of the emphatic “I” and “man” includes the entire male human gender, not only a particular “I” or a particular “man” (cf. De Wette, Die Sprüche, 392; Toy, Commentary, 521). In this regard, the first clause of v. 2 should be translated as “I (or every human) am a being without a mind and not a human being.”

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The compound with חכמה in the nominal sentence, where the particle ָﬠַっぱ would be expected, is a negating single word to negate something that is called “human understanding” but, in reality, is more than simple understanding (cf. הָﬠַっぱ חָכְמָה —

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84 Gemser (Sprüche, 79) reads the negation as a positive stylistic adversative: “da” (“since I have learned the wisdom and earned knowledge of holies”). His proposal is followed and explained by Sauer (Sprüche, 99), who in this particular construction חכמה finds “eine bekraftigende Aussage eben der Parallelismus membrorum” (“a corroborative statement and also the parallelismus membrorum”) and translates it as “aber da” (“but since”). Fichtner (Proverbs in the BHS, 1316) suggests changing the negation חכמה into the particle of desire חוח (“O, that,” Lat. utinam). Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbii, 599) see a concessive waw here, translating it: “pur non avendo intelleto umano” (“although not having human intellect”), while Waltke (Proverbs 15–31, 456) links the asservative ה and the waw conjunctive of v. 2a with the waw conjunctive of v. 3a, both with the same idea: “Surely…” (v. 2a); “Indeed…” (v. 3a).

The LXX translation is not consistent in its rendering of חכמה. For the LXX, the rendition of the noun חכמה in the Historical Books, on the one hand, and Isaiah and Daniel on the other, is regularly the noun σώφροσις (“union,” “logical reasoning,” cf. Deut 4:6; 1 Chr 12:33; 22:12; 2 Chr 2:11; 12; Isa 11:2; 27:11; 29:14, 24; 33:19; Dan 1:20; 9:22; 10:1), whereas in Job and Proverbs the choice of the alternative lexemes is much more varied. Thus, besides the noun σώφροσις, which in Job 20:3; 28:20; 38:4; 39:17; Prov 9:6 and 9:10 is the “ability to give a correct answer,” the noun ἐπιστήμη used in Job 28:12. 28; 39:26 refers much more to the “capability to follow the right precept,” while φροντίς in Prov 1:2; 7:4; 8:14; 16:16 and 30:2 and ἐννοεῖν in Prov 4:1; 23:4 allude to the “fitness to drill” (φῶς — “skill of thinking”; “mind”) “the brain” (φρονοῦς — “brain”). The LXX sometimes alludes to the noun חכמה, equivalent to חכמה, and translates it as σοφία (which is the LXX’s exclusive rendering for חכמה), especially when it occurs as the first noun and the noun חכמה is absent (but see the exception in 1 Chr 22:12, where חכמה is always rendered as σώφροσις), while another synonym is חכמה (“attitude,” “skill,” cf. Prov 2:3 and 3:5). There are two places in the LXX where the noun חכמה is even translated as a verb: in Dan 8:15, the noun is translated with the infinitive of διανοοῦμαι (“to think over”) and Jer 23:30 with νοεῖν (“gain the understanding of something”). The Syr chose the noun ἡγιασμὸν ("intend") followed by the existential negation μὴ ἔχων ("there is not in me"). The Aramaic in the Tg follows the Hebrew lexicography and reads לֵב instead of the Aramaic חכמה ("understanding"). The Vg translation is much more consistent in its rendering of the noun חכמה, where the nouns intelligentia and intellectus to render exclusive human qualities predominate, especially in the Books of Job and Daniel (Job 20:3; 28:12, 20, 28; 34:16; 38:4, 36; 39:17; Dan 1:20; 8:15; 9:22; 10:1; Isa 11:2; 29:24; Deut 4:6; Jer 23:20 and Prov 23:23). By contrast, in the Book of Proverbs, the same Hebrew vocable is translated by the noun prudentia, an ethical and moral quality (Prov 3:5; 4:1, 5; 7:4; 8:14; 9:6, 10; 16:16 and 23:4; Isa 29:14). The other words that the Vg utilizes for the same lexeme are sapientia (Job 39:26; Prov 2:3; 30:2; Isa 27:11; 33:19) and sensus, both representing religious terms or qualities provided by God (1 Chr 22:12 and 2 Chr 2:11). In addition, for the same word חכמה, nouns such as scientia (2 Chr 2:12) and eruditas (1 Chr 12:23) are found in reference to human skill or intellectual ability, whereas disciplina (Prov 1:2) is presented as the attitude of learning. De Wette (Die Sprüche, 392) reads in Prov 30:2 ‘Einsicht’ (“understanding”). Scoralick, (Sprichwörter, 1255) translates the noun as “Menschenverstand” (“human understanding”). Richter (‘Agur,’ 419) translates it with the conditional: “und besäße nicht den Scharfsinn (anderen Menschen” (“and if I did not possess the acuity of [other] people”). Toy (Commentary, 520, as well as Lipiński, ”Peninna,” 75; Torrey, 95; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbii, 599; Murphy, Proverbs, 225) rightly translates the noun as “human intelligence,” as do Scott (Proverbs, 175), and Steinmann, (Proverbs, 589) with “human understanding.”
“unrighteousness” in Jer 22:13 or לֹא־כ חַ — “helplessness” in Job 26:2).\textsuperscript{86} The negative particle לֹא continues with a circumstantial clause through the next circumstantial clause in v. 3: “without… and without…” (cf. Job 42:3). The noun בִּינָה is always used in close connection with חָכְמָה and besides the synonymic tendency, the difference is remarkable. The original meaning of the root ב is “to distinguish,” “to separate.”\textsuperscript{87} This Proto-Semitic meaning explains the primary usage of the noun as an exclusive definition of the separation in term of the knowledge of a human and nonhuman being. The LXX sometimes translates בִּינָה as σύνεσις (“union,” “logical reasoning,” cf. רוח מִבִּינָה in Job 20:3)\textsuperscript{88} and its cognate שֶּׂכֶּל (cf. 1 Chr 22:12), which, in contrast with סכל (“idiot”), means “brain” (cf. modern Hebrew שֵׂכֶּל—“mind,” “intellect”).\textsuperscript{89} In Job 28:28, the difference between the nouns בִּינָה and חָכְמָה is that the first refers to the capacity for the basic distinguishing between good and evil (to chose the right side, the wise person also advises to direct בִּינָה to God; cf. Prov 3:5; Isa 29:24), while the second concerns distinguishing the worship of God from the dishonor of God (cf. Prov 2:2–8; 9:10). Likewise, the first term is said to be נָתַן (“given”) to man or אֱלֹהִים (“assigned”) to humans, while the second is שֶׂכֶּל (“shared”) with humans (cf. Job 38:36; 39:17).\textsuperscript{90} In addition, the noun בִּינָה is the capacity for listening to instruction and teaching (Job 34:16), while חָכְמָה achieves learning with knowledge and skill (cf. Prov

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{86} Cf. GKC, §152, a 1, n. 1; Delitzsch (Commentary, 272).
  \item \textsuperscript{87} H. Ringgren, “בין,” TDOT 1:99.
  \item \textsuperscript{88} LSJ, 1712.
  \item \textsuperscript{89} W. Baumgartner, “Das Aramäische im Buch Daniel,” ZAW 45 (1927) 142–46.
  \item \textsuperscript{90} There is also the construct form of the noun בִּינָה with the verb ידוע (2 Chr 2:11, 12; Job 38:4; Prov 4:1), where the meaning is much more determinative, i.e., “capable,” “skilled,” “competent man” (cf. Latin trans. scientissimum).  
\end{itemize}
8:14). In the MT, when these two nouns occur together, חָכְמָה is regularly first followed by בִּינָה (cf. Deut 4:6; 2 Chr 2:11. 12; Job 28:28; 38:36; 39:17; Prov 1:2; 4:5. 7; 7:4; 9:10; 16:16; 23:23; Isa 11:2; 29:14; Dan 1:20). The human faculties of the mind in the MT are regularly listed according to their order of precedence: חָכְמָה, מוּסָר, and בִּינָה (cf. Prov 1:2; 23:23). The noun בִּינָה is the human intellectual ability “to learn and to accept knowledge, council or advice;” the capacity for knowledge and understanding, which requires מוּסָר—“training” and “skill,” “discipline,” “lifestyle” and “regime.” Finally, חָכְמָה regularly comes from God (Job 32:13), can be taken from humans only by God (Job 39:17), and accomplishes the terms מָּוּסָר and בִּינָה. Thus, בִּינָה is not only intellectual but also spiritual and, as such, has the religious significance in acquiring fear of God (cf. Job 28:28; 39:17; Ps 111:10; Prov 7:4; 9:10; 16:16; Isa 11:2; 29:14; Dan 1:20) or following the commandments (the Greek translation of חָכְמָה in Prov 4:5 is ἐντολή—“commandment”). This religious characteristic of בִּינָה can be detected in Job 28:12 (28:20) in the two questions: וְהַחָכְמָה מֵאַיִּן תִּמָצֵא (“and the wisdom, where does it come from to be found?”) וְאֵי זֶּה מְקוֹם בִּינָה (“and where is that place [in man] of intellect?”). Since מוּסָר is a term for discipline, when the noun חָכְמָה is absent from the list of human cognitive capacities, the noun בִּינָה takes the place of חָכְמָה (Prov 2:3; 8:14) as a general human ability. In the Book of Proverbs, the noun בִּינָה regularly precedes the noun חָכְמָה (1:2; 4:5. 7; 7:4; 9:10; 16:16; 23:23), except in 30:2, where

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91 This is probably the reason why Fox argues that the noun בִּינָה is more peculiar and determinate, while חָכְמָה is more comprehensive or all-inclusive. The biblical citations mentioned above do not support this statement however. Cf. M. Fox, “Words for Wisdom,” ZAH 6 (1993) 149–69, here 154.
again the noun בינה is presented as an exclusively human quality in which חכמה represents a more particular and sophisticated human quality (the Greek translation of חכמה is regularly σοφία) as a higher human achievement. In Prov 9:6, as well as in Isa 27:11; 33:19, a man without בינה behaves improperly for a human being. In Jer 23:30, the noun בינה is a conditio sine qua non for comprehending prophecy or vision (cf. Dan 8:15; 9:22 and 10:1). Thus, the construct noun בינה in Prov 30:2 is associated with the subsequent genitive without a verb for “learning,” “training” or “acquiring skill” because בינה cannot be achieved if it is not intrinsic to a person’s nature. The copulative Metēg marks a proclitic, which is atonic and depends on the countertone, while the Mērḥa represents a conjunctive accent with the following noun. The translation of the tonic construction is “and without intellect/knowledge.”

This common noun in conjunction with the quasi-dative preposition is part of the preceding negative single word in close context and represents the mental quality of mankind in general or everything that appertains to the humanity that is negating or denying in v. 2. Again, the Mīnah marks the second strong conjunctive accent and the Sīlāq the last tone-syllable of the verse. Thus, I translate the entire nominal negativing sentence as a circumstantial clause: “and without my human intellect/knowledge.”

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92 A literal translation is offered by Clifford (Proverbs, 259) i.e., “the brains of human being.”
93 This noun is one of the most frequent words in the MT (five hundred sixty-two times) and is attested in all known ancient Semitic languages. The root is not certain and varies from the Proto-Semitic adāmu (“to build,” “to make”) to 'adamah (red soil). Cf. Fritz Maass, "אדם," TDOT 1:78–79. The LXX reads the word generically as ἀνθρώπων (“of humans”), as does the Vg with hominum (“of humans”). The Syr translates the word with the construction דבנה אנשל (“of the humans”), as does the Tg, repeating the genitive construction of the previous nominal clause דבנה נשה (“of the humans”). De Wette (Die Sprüche, 392) also relates it in terms of humanity in general with “anderer Menschen” (“of other people”).
The MT does not use the verb לִֽמְדָנִי in any connection with the noun חָכְמָה, except in this verse. Instead, the verb occurs in a conjunction with the noun דַעַת in Job 21:22; Ps 119:66; and Isa 40:14, in reference to God’s exclusive privilege of teaching דַעַת. In Qoheleth, the wise preacher was also allowed to teach דַעַת to the people. Otherwise, the verb is used as a synonym for instructing people by God (Deut 4:1; 5:10. 31; 2 Sam 1:18, 22, 35; Jer 32:33), by Moses (Deut 4:14; 5:1; 6:1; 31: 22), by Ezra (Ezra 7:10), by princes and teachers (2 Chr 17:7; Jer 31:34), and by fathers and elders (Deut 11:19; 14:32; 17:19) about God’s will, his paths, statutes, commandments and the fear of him (Deut 14:32; 17:19; Pss 25:4, 5, 9; 34:12; 51:15; 71:17; 94: 10, 12; 119:7, 12, 26, 64, 68, 71, 73, 108, 124, 135, 171; 132:12; 143:10; Isa 26:9, 24; 48:17; Jer 12:16; 31:18). Summa summarum, the verb לִֽמְדָנִי is closely related to listening—learning—obtaining (cf. Prov 5:13; Song 8:2; Isa 1:17; Jer 9:19; 19:3, 6; Dan 1:4; Hos 10:11), and its meaning is not only to learn but also to achieve and obtain what is learned. The copulative Mêthég with the Mêrêkâ shows a strong conjunctive connection with the following noun. Thus, instead of translating “and I have not obtained wisdom,” the circumstantial clause “and without my obtaining…” would emphasize the goal of the final human achievement represented in the next clause.

94 The Syr translation and Vg generally follow the Hebrew text. Here, the Syr uses simple form of the Pe ‘al in the view הֲלֹֽא־לָמַ֥דְתִּי (“I did not comprehend”). The Vg also takes the verb as a perfect active non didici (“I did not learn”). The Tg utilizes the verb הֲלֹֽאָל that corresponds to the Hebrew לִֽמְדָנִי: “I did not learn.” Instead of the expected Greek οὐκ ἐγνών (“I do not know”), the LXX changes the subject “I” to “He – God” and reverses the negative human perspective to a positive one reading θεὸς ἐδιδάξαμεν με (“[but] God instructed me”) that would correspond to Hebrew וְאֵל לִּמְדָנִי (cf. Jäger, Observationes, 216). Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 599) again found a concessive wāw here: “pur non avendo imparato a essere saggio” (“although having not learned to be wise”).

95 The verb also is utilized for the pagan influences on Israel (Deut 18:9; 20:18; 31:19; Pss 106:35; Jer 2:33; 9:4. 13; 10:2; 13:21); for technique of war (Judg 3:2; 1 Chr 5:18; Pss 18:35; 144:1; Song 3:8; Isa 2:4; Mic 4:3) or the skill of the singing (1 Chr 25:7; Ps 60:1).
The noun חָכְמָה denotes a quality that God has shared with humans (Exod 31:3, 6; 35:33; 2 Chr 1:12). It does not occur with the verb לָבֵּן in the MT except here and in Job 33:33, where it also appears with the verb אלָּלְחַךְ but, again, not in the meaning of learning but rather of correcting, learning and obtaining the technique or achieving proper reasoning (cf. LXX τέκνη for חָכְמָה in 1 Kgs 7:14). The distinctive association of the verb לָבֵּן and the noun חָכְמָה in Prov 30:3 should be understood in the sense of “obtaining” חָכְמָה because חָכְמָה is something to be found (מצא in Prov 3:13) or to be obtained (גָּם in Prov 4:5, 7; 23:23) and placed into the human heart—לב (Qoh 1:17; 2:3) or human insight—בוא (Prov 2:10) as the proper access to the “human qualities” of intellect and spirit. Genesis does not use the lexeme חָכְמָה, and Exodus in all eight occurrences as well as Deuteronomy in 4:6 and 34:9 uses the term of the “plenitude of human capacity” given by God (Exod 28:3; 31:3, 6; 35:26, 31, 35; 36:1, 2). In 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles (cf. 1 Kgs 2:6; 3:28; 5:9, 10; 5:14; 5:26; 7:14; 10:4. 6, 7, 8, 23, 24; 11:41; 2 Chr 1:10. 11,12; 9:3, 5, 6, 7, 22, 23; cf. 2 Sam 14:20; 20:22 and 1 Chr 28:21), it now denotes the plenitude of human capacity expressed in the many qualities presented as talents אֲשֶּר־נָתַן אֱלֹהִּים בְּלֶּּב־אִּיש (“which God had placed in man’s heart,” cf. 1 Kgs 10:24) for חָכְמָה (the qualities and glory

96 All ancient translations closely follow the well-known Hebrew lexeme. Thus, the LXX translates the Hebrew direct object with the accusative without the article σοφίαν—“wisdom.” The Syr has the equivalent noun חכמיה—“the wisdom,” as do the Tg (בכהיה) and the Vg (sapientiam). Michaelis (p. 98) and Doederlein (Sprüche, 183) differentiate between חכמיה as “Weltweisheit”—“worldly wisdom” and קדש כְּלָיָם as “Gotteslehren”—“teachings of God.” Herder (p. 126) reads here “der Menschen Klugheit”—“human cleverness,” while Frankenberg (Sprüche, 160; Moore, 99; Steinmann, 589; Sæbø, Sprüche, 359) reads “menschliches Verständnis”—“human understanding.” Richter (p. 420) translates the lexeme as “Fähigkeit”—“skill” or “ability.”

97 In all the above citations, the predominant LXX rendering for the vocable חכמיה is σοφία (alternative words occur in Exod 28:3 as αἰσθήσις [“experience”]; Exod 31:6 as σύνσις; in Exod 35:26 as διάνοια [“intelligence”] and in Exod 36:2 as ἐπιστήμη). In the discourse concerning Solomon’s wisdom, besides the noun
accompany him (God); in him is counsel and instruction,” cf. Job 12:13). In the Wisdom Books of the MT, the priceless perfection of חָכְמָה again requires a human disposition of בִּינָה (here contra Malbin: cf. Ginsburg and Weinberger, Mishlei, 618; cf. Prov 8:11; 10:13; 16:16; 18:4; Qoh 2:26). Via בִּינָה, the prerequisite for חָכְמָה is imprinted on the human mind by God (יֹּאמֶר לְךָ חָכְמָה יָאָרָה הנֶחְשָׁבָל כָּל הַיָּמִים — “for the qualities [wisdom] will enter into your heart;” cf. Prov 2:10; 17:16; cf. Job 11:13; 39:17; Ps 51:8; cf. Prov 2:2, 6) or the spirit of God, which rests upon man (Isa 11:2) and can be acquired with practice by the wise or comes with age (cf. Job 11:12; 32:7; Ps 90:12; Prov 5:1; 13:10; 29:15) and, finally, which manifests itself in the fear of God and practice of God’s justice (Job 28:28; Pss 37:30; 111:10; Prov 1:7; 4:5; 9:10; 10:31; 11:2; 14:8; 15:33; Isa 33:6). In addition, חָכְמָה is the designation for a reasonable man (cf. Prov 17:24; 24:14; 28:26; Qoh 7:11; 12; 9:18). The result of חָכְמָה is abundant, involving personal success and profit for society (Qoh 7:19; 9:15; 10:10; Isa 33:6). In this regard, חָכְמָה denotes the complex of human virtues manifested in the “plenitude of human capacity” or

σοφία the LXX also uses φρόνησις (1 Kgs 3:28; 5:9, 10; 10:4, 6, 8, 23, 24), σύνεσις (1 Kgs 7:14), or simply ἀγαθός (1 Kgs 10:7). The Vg remains again very consistent in its rendering of the word חָכְמָה as sapientia, except in Exod 28:3 and 1 Kgs 5:9, where the synonym prudentia appears, and in 2 Chr 9:22 gloria, where as a general noun it denotes all the good that Solomon acquired from God. The LXX and Vg translations of Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Qoheleth of the noun חָכְמָה regularly use the vocables σοφία and sapientia (Job 11:6; 12:2, 12:13; 13:5; 15:8; 26:3; 28:12, 18, 20, 28; 32:7, 13; 33:33; 38:36; 39:17; Pss 37:30; 51:8; 90:12; 104:24; 107:27; 111:10; Prov 1:2, 7; 2:6, 10; 3:13, 19; 4:7, 11; 5:1; 7:4; 8:1, 11, 12; 9:10; 10:23; 11:2; 13:10; 14:6; 33; 21:30; 23:23; 24:3, 14; 28:26; 29:3, 15; 30:3; 31:26; Qoh 1:13. 16, 17, 18; 2:3, 9, 12, 13, 26; 7:11, 12, 19, 23, 25; 8:1, 16; 9:10, 15, 16, 18; 10:1, 10).

In Prov 4:11, a father or instructor teaches his pupils, not wisdom (for wisdom is from God above) but חָכְמָה ("the way to obtain wisdom").

The understanding of חָכְמָה in biblical wisdom literature and in the prophetic books is remarkable. Qoheleth already asserts the inscrutability of real wisdom and in connection with חָכְמָה observes that this quality can be useless for humans (1:17, 18). Further, in Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, חָכְמָה is a quality that can be spoiled and ruined by human arrogance (Isa 29:14; 47:10; Ezek 28:5, 7, 17) and the rejection of the word of God turns wisdom into falsehood (Jer 8:9). The “fear of God” in the biblical wisdom literature is an exclusive reward given to man from God.
“richness of human qualities.”

The strong disjunctive accent $Atnāh$ marks the principal division of the second half of the verse. Thus, my translation of the second circumstantial clause is “and without my obtaining (other) human qualities.”

\footnote{Fox (Proverbs 1–9, 34) glosses the noun as “expertise.” Waltke (Proverbs, 1–15, 77) cites examples of the relationship between חָכְמָה and חָכְמַת.}
The wāw introduces a subordinate clause, which clarifies the preceding circumstantial clauses. The noun בִּינָה primarily denotes “understanding,” “perception” or “judgment.”

In Gen 2:9.17, בִּינָה makes it possible to distinguish good acts from evil ones and in Proverbs differentiates between an intelligent man and an unintelligent one (Prov 1:29; 11:9; 15:7. 14; 19:25, 27; 21:11; 29:7; cf. Qoh 2:26), while in Deut 4:42 and 19:4, as

101 The discussion of the second wāw in v. 3 goes back to the Greek, Latin, Syriac and Aramaic translations. The LXX, with its misreading of the negation ἄν (as the noun μὴ), changed the first wāw to adversative so that consequently the negative expression of human research turns into the positive result of human inspiration by God. Instead the Vg, as well as the Syr and Tg, continue here with wāw consecutivum. However, some scholars, such as Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 97, as well as Doederlein, Sprüche, 183; Herder, 126; Hensler, 283; De Wette, 392; Lipiński, “Peninna,” 75; Richter, “Agur,” 420 and Wallke, Proverbs, 15–31, 456) still view the second wāw in v. 3 as wāw adversativum and read “but (nevertheless) I know,” or “I want to know” (Doederlein) or “I want to experience” (Wallke, 456) the teaching (knowledge) of God. By contrast, Ziegler (Übersetzung, 353, as well as Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220) remains on the right track, reading here a wāw copulativum and subsequently negatively translates: “daß ich Einsicht in die Natur des Heiligen hätte” (“that I might have insight into the nature of the Holy”). In a similarly negative manner, Wildeboer (Die Sprüche, 85, as well as Berthoau, 168, Frankenberg, Sprüche, 160; Gemser, Sprüche, 79; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Schneider, Sprüche, 159; Plöger, Sprüche, 345; Meinhold, Sprüche, 494; Garrett, Proverbs, 235; Saebo, Sprüche, 359) reads here the wāw of clarification: “So dass ich” (“So that I”). Delitzsch (Commentary, 273) followed by Toy (Commentary, 251) rightly notes that here the positive בִּינָה is subject to the negative בֵּינָה and has to be read with the negation. Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 850) reads the wāw alternative here, which is also subject to the negative בֵּינָה ("or have knowledge of the Holy One").

102 The LXX for the Hebrew vocable בִּינָה regularly uses the noun ἐπιστήμη ("experience," cf. Prov 2:10; 3:20; 5:2; 8:10,12; 10:14; 11:9; 12:1; 23; 13:16; 14:6; 7; 18; 15:7; 14; 18:15; 19:25; 27; 22:12; 17; 20; 23:12), γνῶσις ("knowledge," cf. Pss 19:3; 94:10; 119:66; 139:6; Prov 2:6; 8:9; 13:16; 22:20) as is also the case in Prov 30:3 or the adjective γνωστός ("known," cf. Gen 2:9; Prov 8:12; 21:11). Besides these, there are the synonym as ἐπιστήμη ("analysis," "understanding," cf. Exod 31:3; 35:31; Num 24:16), even the noun ἐπίγνωσις ("knowledge," cf. 1 Kgs 7:14) or the adjective ἐπίγνωσμον ("intelligent," cf. Prov 29:7) and the verb ἐπιστήμω ("be acquainted with," cf. Prov 15:2; 22:17) or verbal forms of ὁδός ("to know," cf. Job 10:7; 13:2; 15:2). Apart from the noun σοφία ("union," "logical reasoning"), the usual rendering of בִּינָה, in some examples the translation of בִּינָה is related to σοφία (Prov 2:6; 8:12; 9:10). The Vg’s regular word for בִּינָה is scientia (Gen 2:9; Exod 31:3; 31; Job 21:22; Pss 19:3; 94:10; 119:66; 139:6; Prov 1:4; 7; 2:6; 10; 3:20; 5:2; 8:9; 10:14; 11:9; 12:1; 23; 13:16; 14:7; 18; 15:7; 14; 18:15; 19:27; 22:12; 20; 23:12; 29:7; 30:3). In addition, there are the synonyms doctrina (Num 24:16; 1 Kgs 7:4; Prov 8:10; 14:6; 22:17; 24:4), eruditio (Prov 8:12) and disciplina (Prov 1:29 and 19:25). Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 98) reads the Hebrew lexemes בִּינָה בִּינָה together as a cumulative reference to God’s teaching or Gotteslehren. Similarly, Herder (Herders sämmtliche Werke, 126) reads the lexemes in genitive of inalienable possession “Götter Wissenschaft” (“the science of God”). Hensler (Erklärungen, 284–85) comparing Ziegler’s translation, suggests reading בִּינָה not as “Kenntniss” (“knowledge”) as Ziegler does (Neue Übersetzung, 353), but as “Achtung” or “Erfurcht” (“reverence”), which, given the attribute בִּינָה, has a copulative function with vv. 5–7 as “reverence for God.” Instead, Doederlein (Sprüche, 184) translates the noun בִּינָה as “die Religion” (“the religion [of God]”).
well as in Josh 20:3.5, דַעַת refers to “perception” of an intentional or unintentional criminal act. Furthermore, while חָכְמָה is used in close connection with listening and following, דַעַת is linked to talking and speaking (cf. Job 34:35; 35:16; 38:2; Prov 5:2; 14:7; 15:2; 20:15). There is also a difference between דַעַת as God’s effective “judgment” (Ps 139:6; Prov 2:5; 3:20) and דַעַת as acquired human “experienced perception” (Job 10:7; 13:2; 15:2; 33:2; Ps 19:3; Prov 1:22, 29; 2:10; 10:14; 12:1, 23; 13:16).

Since the verb לָדַע is not found in correlation with the noun חָכְמָה except in Prov 30:3, while it occurs three times with the noun דַעַת with the meaning “to acquire perception” (Job 21:22; Ps 94:10; 119:66; Prov 23:12; 2:6), the לָדַע in Prov 30:3 could be understood as a verb governing the two objects חָכְמָה and דַעַת as a parallel pair that often go together (cf. Exod 31:3; 35:31; 1 Kgs 7:4; Prov 1:7; Qoh 1:16; Isa 11:2; 33:6; 103). The LXX for the lexeme דַעַת has two words here: σύνεσις and ἐπιστήμη. The Syr with its word emphasizes “the act of recognizing,” “knowing and distinguishing” humans from other living beings. The Vg regularly renders the Hebrew lexeme דַעַת as the noun scientia, which means “learned and memorized knowledge” (cf. Delitzsch, Commentary, 272; van der Ploeg, Prediker, 100; Gemser, Sprüche, 78; Lipiński, “Peninna,” 75; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220; Plöger, Sprüche, 359; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Moore, 99; Meinhold, Sprüche, 494; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 309; Clifford, Proverbs, 59; Steinmann, Proverbs, 589; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 855; Sæbø, Sprüche, 359). Toy (Commentary, 251) sees a syntactical correspondence between the noun דַעַת and the verb אֵדָע and translates both with the verbal form “I do not comprehend,” while Waltke (Proverbs, 15–31, 456 and 471) translates “but I want to experience,” which would be gained through God’s revelation.

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104 Among forty-four occurrences of the lexeme תְבוּנָה in the MT, the noun appears only fifteen times as an independent word without other synonyms meaning “cleverness,” “prudence” (Deut 32:28; Job 26:12; 32:11; Pss 78:72; 136:5; 147:5; Prov 2:11; 11:12; 14:29; 15:29; 18:2; Isa 40:28; Hos 13:2; Obad 1:7, 8). With חָכְמָה (cf. 1 Kgs 5:9; Job 12:12,13; Ps 94:4; Prov 2:2,3,6; 3:13,19; 5:1,8; 21:30; 24:3; Jer 10:12; 51:15; Ezek 28:4) or נֶפֶשׁ (cf. Prov 17:27; Isa 40:14; 44:19) or both (Exod 31:3; 36:1; 1 Kgs 7:14) the meaning of תְבוּנָה is “intellect.” For the same lexeme, the LXX uses the Greek noun ἐπιστήμη (“analysis”) or σύνεσις (“logical reasoning”), while the Vg utilizes the Latin lexemes prudentia and intellegentia.
and translated as “(and without obtaining) the plenitude of human
capacity and perception.” The difficulty in accepting this rendition is that there is a
verb in the second part of the verse. The genitive קְדָּשִים is a cumulative construct form
with תֶּרֶם and should be read as the “perception of קְדָּשִים.” In this regard, תֹּרָה
represents a conjunctive accent with the following word and, thus, according to the
accentuation, it goes together with what follows rather than with the previous clause.
The noun קְדָּשִים as part of the construct state of the following בִּינָי would be translated
as “perception of.”

The noun קְדָּשִים sometimes occurs in the plural form with the article, especially in the
example.

105 The problem of the syntax of בִּינָי קְדָּשִים ("and the understanding of the transcendental perception")
is also found in Prov 9:10, where the LXX tries to explain the concept with the addition: τὸ γὰρ γνῶναι νόμου
διανοίας ἡγεῖται ("because it is good to know the law of understanding").

106 If v. 3 is understood in this way, the translation would be as follows:
Subsequently, I would be a being without mind and not a human being.
And shall I (or you) know the transcendent perception,
without human comprehension,
and without my obtaining the plenitude of human capacity and perception?
But, you know well who goes up and down from heaven...

107 With the noun θεός, the LXX clearly distinguishes the lexeme ἁγιοὶ ("saints") from ("the Holy One"),
and ἁγιοὶ is related not to God but to his creatures. The Syr utilizes a lexeme here with the same Semitic root (קדש)
and translates it as a construct form of "I have not learned the act of recognition" (קדש אֱלֹהִים) "of the holy persons.
The Tg reads the Hebrew lexeme קְדָּשִים in the same way as the Syr: ὁ ἁγιότατος ἡγεῖται ("the knowledge of the saints").
The Vg, similarly to the Syr and Tg, utilizes the noun sanctores ("the saints," cf. Frankenberg, Sprüche, 160).
Ziegler (Neue Uebersetzung, 354; Schneider, Sprüche, 159) in this lexeme sees "die Vollkommensten" or "die
Allerheiligste" ("the most perfect or all saints"). Ewald (Die Salômonischen, 252) and Cox (Proverbs, 239) has
"divinity" here, while Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 310) render "saints" or "divinités." Kamphausen
(Sprüche, 386, as well as Delitzsch, Commentary, 273 and Gemser, Sprüche, 79) translates the noun in the
attributive state: "die heiligen Erkenntniß" ("the sacred knowledge"). Durell (Critical Remarks, 269) and Holden
(An Attempt, 367) based on Hos 12:1, differentiate the title קְדָּשִים ("holypersons") from קְדָּשִׁים ("holy things").
Wildeboer (Die Sprüche, 85) translates the noun as the singular absolute state "der Heilige (Gott).” By contrast,
Grätz (“Exegetische,” 435) reads “Engel” (“Angel”). Taking the form as pluralia majestatis, Doederlein (Sprüche,
184, as well as Bertheau, 168; De Wette, 392; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220; Plöger, Sprüche, 354; Meinhold,
Sprüche, 494; Garrett, Proverbs, 235; Richter, “Agur,” 420; Sæbø, Sprüche, 359) translates it as “des Heiligen,”
("der heilige Gott") or “Holheit Gottes” ("God’s sovereignty"). Toy (Commentary, 521, as well as Moore, 100 and
Clifford, Proverbs, 259; Koptak, 651; Ross, 1119; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 456; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 850) reads
here “the Holy One.”
partitive genitive of the technical term קָדוֹשִּׁים ("the most holy place"), which regularly refers to a particular area of the tent of the ark (Exod 26:33, 34) or of the Temple (Ezra 2:63; Ezek 41:4) and sometimes without the article as in קָדוֹשוֹת ("holy of holies"), concerning the separation between the holy and profane (Exod 29:37; 30:10; Lev 2:3, 10; 6:10,18, 22; 7:1,6; 10:12,17; 14:13; 24:9; 27:28; cf. Lev 18:9; 1 Chr 23:13; Ezek 43:12; 45:3; 48:12; Dan 9:24). The same plural form generally refers to things consecrated to God (Exod 28:38; Num 5:7; 18:19; 31:6).

Secondly, the plural form of the adjective קָדוֹש highlights the separation between God’s holy people and gentiles (Lev 11:44, 45; 19:2; 20:7, 26; 21:6; Num 15:40; 16:3; Ps 89:6, 8; Ezek 36:38). Besides these two major uses, the plural form קְדָשִּים occurs in Josh 24:19 as an attribute of God אלהים קְדָשִים ("holy God"), which makes him incomparable with everything created (cf. 1 Sam 2:2). The plural form קְדָשִים also occurs in two cases with the Maqqēph. In Dan 8:24, עַם־קְדָשִים ("holy people") and in Zech 14:5 כָּל־קְדָשִים ("all holies") distinguishing sinners from the just, holy or saintly people. Finally, the plural form קְדָשִים appears twice in the Book of Proverbs as a descriptive adjective modifying the noun דַעַת (Prov 9:10 and 30:3). Since the plural forms קְדָשִים or קִדָשִים in all the aforementioned examples denote separation between the holy and profane, just as the verb דַעַת marks the distinction between good and evil, as well as intentional or unintentional acts, the noun דַעַת with its attribute קְדָשִים has to

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be understood as the “transcendental perception”\textsuperscript{110} that distinguishes the reality of the material universe (cf. v. 4) from the immaterial reality.\textsuperscript{111} The self-standing plural בער canal does not represent the \textit{tantum plurale}, i.e., the “Holy One” (as does the Aramaic רחמים—“mercy” in Dan 2:18) because of the absence of a closer syntactical cluster that denotes God himself.\textsuperscript{112} The accent \textit{Mûnah} is also a strong conjunctive accent here that goes with the concluding word of the verse. Thus, the translation of the construct form קדש ידוע would be “transcendental perception.”

\textsuperscript{3cβ} The verb ידע is very frequent in the MT and denotes the knowledge not only of man but also of God (cf. Gen 3:5; Prov 24:12). Moreover, besides its reference to human knowing and understanding of God’s paths (Gen 18:19; Job 21:14; 67:3; 95:10; Ps

\footnotesize \textsuperscript{110} Malbim (in Ginsburg and Weinberger, 618) translates the construction as “sacred knowledge.” Similarly, Gary A. Rendsburg (“Hebrew Philological Notes, II,” \textit{HS} 42 [2001] 187–95, here 188, n. 8) reads “knowledge of holiness.”

\footnotesize \textsuperscript{111} Ziegler (\textit{Uebersetzung}, 354) rightly observes that “wer steigt hinauf, und steigt wieder herunter, um das, was er dort gesehen und gelernt hat, auf der Erde bekannt zu machen” (“who climbs up, and goes back down, that means, he (who went up and came back), whatever he has seen and learned there, it has been manifested on the earth”).

\footnotesize \textsuperscript{112} Toy, \textit{Commentary}, 521 (as well as Moore, 100; Clifford, \textit{Proverbs}, 259; Koptak, 651; Ross, 1119; Fox, \textit{Proverbs 10–31}, 850) sees the Lord as \textit{tantum plurale}, i.e., “the Holy One,” in the sense of “internalizing knowledge of the Holy One” (Waltke, \textit{Proverbs, 15–31}, 456).

\footnotesize \textsuperscript{113} The LXX translates the Hebrew imperfect with the perfect ἔγνωκα (“I knew”). The Syr attributes to the verb the additional or inclusive לֹא and reads the verb with the Pe’al perfect: דעוֹת קדשׁ יָדַע (“I have not learned the knowledge of the saints”). The Tg has the same root (ידע) as the Hebrew, but instead of the MT imperfect form has the Pe’al perfect with the negation: מַעֲמַר יִדְעָה (“I did not know”). The Vg also understands the last verb of the verse as the negation of the preceding לֹא and reads: \textit{non novi} (“I did not know,” cf. Bunsen, \textit{Vollständiges}, 180; Ewald, \textit{Die Salōmonischen}, 250). The imperfect וַיִּדְעָה, together with the preceding perfect, according to Michaelis (\textit{Johann David Michaelis}, 97), Herder (\textit{Herders sämmtliche Werke}, 126) and Hensler (\textit{Erklärungen}, 283) has to be understood as present and rendered: “und doch weis ich der Götter Wissenschaft”—nevertheless I know the science of gods” as the opposition between divine inspiration and human investigation about the transcendent. Richter (“Agur,” 420, as well as Lipiński, “Peninna,” 75, and Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, \textit{I proverbi}, 599) also translates the clause positively as “dann könnte ich dennoch Kenntnis des Heiligen erlangen” (“in that case, I could still gain knowledge of the Holy”).
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143:8) or God’s testimonies (Pss 25:14; 119:125, 152), the verb recurrently expresses human knowledge about God (Exod 5:2; 6:3; 7:5; 7:17; 8:6; 10:2; 14:4, 18; 16:2; 18:11; 29:46; Deut 4:35, 39; 7:9; 8:5; 29:5; 1 Sam 3:7; 1 Kgs 8:60; 18:37; 2 Kgs 19:19; Job 18:21; Pss 59:14; 78:3; 91:14; 100:3; 109:27; Prov 3:6; 30:3; Isa 5:19; 19:21; 37:20; 43:10; 45:5, 6; 49:26; 60:16; Jer 24:7; 31:34; Ezek 6:7, 10, 14; 7:27; 12:15, 16, 20; 13:9, 14, 21, 23; 14:8; 16:62; 17:21, 24; 20:20, 26, 38, 42; 21:5; 22:16; 23:49; 24:24, 27, 25:5, 7, 11, 17; 26:6; 28:23, 26; 29:16, 21; 30:19, 26; 32:15; 34:30; 35:4, 9, 12, 15; 36:23, 38; 37:6, 14, 28; 38:23; 39:6, 7; Hos 2:22; 6:3; 8:2; Joel 2:27; 4:17; Zach 2:13). Finally, the verb ידוע occurs in Proverbs as the intellectual instrument for the achievement of דברי אמת (“the words of truth,” cf. Prov 1:23; 22:19, 21), חכמה (“instruction,” cf. Prov 22:19), ובין (“understanding,” cf. Prov 4:1), or דעת (“perception,” cf. Prov 17:27). As stated above, the Book of Proverbs uses the verb ידע twice in relation to the “transcendental.” In Prov 3:6, the verb in the Qal imperative is part of a construction with the personal suffix, which directly refers to God ידוע (“let Him know!”), while in Prov 30:3 where God’s name is not mentioned, the verb in the Qal imperfect “expresses a condition and consequence which are regarded as being capable of fulfillment in present or future time”114 (cf. Judg 13:12). Here, the accent Sillûq marks the conclusion of the verse that would be translated as “… (how) shall I comprehend the transcendental perception?”

114 GKC, §§159b, n.2 and 107x.
The personal interrogative pronoun refers to the interrogative clause, which in fact opens the series of religious arguments that negate the statement of “ungodliness” and “nothingness” in v. 1. The emphatic question “who is one?” corresponds to the final question “what is his name?” which is not asking for information but about a function (cf. Job 38:5–6; Isa 40:12). The Mehuppāḥ stresses the strong conjunctive relationship with the following and creates an emphatic relationship with the words under the 'azlā lēgarmeh, the disjunctive accent of the conclusion of the first clause. The interrogative מִי would be translated here emphatically: “Who is that one who?”

A frequent verb in the MT, עָלָה (“go up,” “ascend”), is rarely followed by the Maqqēph (cf. Deut 1:22; 30:12; Prov 30:4; Isa 15:5; Jer 33:6; 48:5 and Amos 3:5). The entire verse creates the stress-units 3/3. The noun שָמַיִּם is not used as an object of direction here (“to the heavens”) or a locative (“in the heavens”), but as the instrument

Both, the LXX and Vg, as well as the Tg (מאן—“who?”) begin the clause with the interrogative pronoun, i.e., τίς and quis, while respectively the Syr offers an additional explanatory phrase with the enclitic מַאַנְו (“tell me who is?”). Similarly, Richter (“Agur,” 420) translates ironically: “wer ist schon” (“who is already…?”). For the use of the pronoun מִי in ancient inscriptions, see Shalom M. Paul, Isaiah 40–66: Translation and Commentary (ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2012) 138.

The LXX follows the Hebrew and translates the verb with the aorist ἀνέβη εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν (“[who] went up into the heaven?”). The Syr uses the Pe’al perfect מֶלֶךְ לָעָם (“[who] climbed up to the heaven?”). The Vg also reads the Hebrew verb in the past tense as ascendit in caelum (“[who] ascended into heaven?”). The Tg, as well as the LXX and Syr in its translation introduces the lāmed of direction לשמיא סלִיק (“[who] was ascended up to the heaven?”) Richter (“Agur,” 420) sees here an ironic expression: “hinauf-hinaufgestiegen?” (“[who] went up, up to…?”). All cola with the interrogative מִי, in v 4, have three stress-units:

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118 All cola with the interrogative מִי, in v 4, have three stress-units:
for confrontation and occurs only here together with a verb followed by the Maqqēph. Otherwise, only monosyllabic prepositions and conjunctions are found with the following Maqqēph and the noun שָמַיִּם (cf. Judg 5:20; 2 Sam 22:14; Pss 57:11, 12; Isa 51:6) or הַשָמַיְם (cf. Exod 20:22; Deut 3:25; Jer 23:24). In that close relationship, the construction עָלָה שָמַיִּם, with the verb in the Qal perfect and the noun in the absolute state, does not present the same motion or action as the following way-yiqtol, but rather an act of achievement and domination, which does not involve any human operation here (contra Bartelmus), but rather God’s dominion over the heavens (cf. Prov 31:29): The disjunctive accent ʾazlā lēḡarmeh shows the close syntactic relationship of the conjunctive words. The construction שָמַיִּם עָלָה would not only express an impossible journey to the heavens, but also the capability to go up to the heavens and come down to the earth. In addition, the verb עָלָה here would refer to a dominating over something or domination of something (cf. Ps 47:10; 62:9; Gen 28:12; 31:10) and, thus, be translated by a gerundive: “Who is that one dominating in the heavens?”

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119 In the Book of Proverbs, the distinction between the noun שָמַיִּם without the article and with the article lies in the notion that the noun שָמַיִּם refers to the firmament (cf. Prov 3:19; 8:27; 25:3; 30:4), while הַשָמַיְם denotes rather the sky (Prov 23:5; 30:19).
120 Bartelmus, “שָמַיִּם,” TDOT 15:216.
121 BDB, 748.
The way-qiqtol usually characterizes the completion of the preceding action. The tendency of the verb is to determine the motion of the subject, which does not remain in the domain of the heavens but goes down, not to earth but presumably over the earth. The author of the verse points out that the main problem in the directions “up and down” is in descending from the heavens and not in ascending (cf. Michaelis, Johann David Michaelis, 98). The reference to God’s actions “upon and under the heavens” recalls God’s exclusive right of celestial movement and “cosmic greatness.”

God’s motion “manifests” him as the ruler upon the earth without

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122 The difference in the Hebrew between the possible “ascending” (the first action in qatal) and impossible “descending” (the subsequent action in wayyiqtol) is not recognized by the LXX and Syr. Thus, the LXX translates both verbs with the aorist: κατέβη (“went up… and went down”). The Syr does the same with the Piel perfect (went down). By contrast, the Tg represents the first verb סלק by the passive perfect of Piel, which includes a difference in movement that can be translated: “who is one who, ascended up to heaven, went down?” The Vg also follows the Hebrew sequence of the actions and translates utque descendit (“and then descended”). Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 98, as well as Doederlein, Sprüche, 185; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1255; Cox, Proverbs, 239; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 310; Clifford, Proverbs, 259; Richter, “Agr,” 420) sees the main action in “ascending” and translates: “Wer steigt in der Himmel und kommt wieder herab” (“Who climbs up to the heaven and comes down again?”). By contrast, Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 354, as well as Herder, 126; Hensler, 286; Bertheau, 169; Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386; Ewald, 250; De Wette, 392; Delitzsch, Commentary, 373; Toy, Commentary, 521; Oesterly, Proverbs, 268; Ploeger, Sprüche, 354; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 599; Van Leeuwen, 121; Meinhold, Sprüche, 494; Whybray, 408; Moore, 100; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 457; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 850; Sæbø, Sprüche, 359) does not see the main action only in “ascending” but also in “descending” and simply translates “wer steigt den Himmel und steigt herab” (“who ascended to heaven and descended?”).

123 Cf. Williams’ Hebrew Syntax, §178.

124 There are four main interpretations of the first sentence of v. 4. The first interpretation is linked to the humanly unattainable goal going up to and coming down from heaven (cf. LXX and Syr). The second interpretation recognizes a human possibility to go up to the heavens (cf. the experience of Elijah in 2 Kgs 2:11) but excludes any possibility of coming down again (Vg, Tg). The third interpretation is that of Van Leeuwen (“The Background…,” 102–21), where the heavenly ascent and descent is a possible journey only for “gods and quasi-divine figures.” The fourth interpretation is probably the closest to the Hebrew text and also logically links to the other themes in v. 4, and denotes God’s cosmological dominion over the earth and under the heavens, or as Crenshaw (“Clanging Symbols,” 51–64) translates “obtaining control” over the heavens.

125 Rashi attributes to Moses the exclusive privilege of going up to heaven, receiving the Law, and coming back to earth (cf. Exod 19:3; cf. Ginsburg and Weinberger, Mishlei, 619).

126 G. Mayer’s statement (“יָרַד,” TDOT 6:322) that “without any hint of theophany J uses yrd in Gen. 11:5; 18:21 (Prov. 30:4)… and only that matters is this separation, which only God is able to transcend,” is incomplete because the author of Prov 30:4 demonstrates not only God’s transcendence but above all God’s authorship of and dominion over creation.

127 BDB, 432.
touching earth. The accent *Pazer qaṭan* places the disjunctive emphasis on the morpheme רַדְּ as the conclusion of the preceding *'azlā lēqarmeh*. The descending action features God’s creating work “upon and on the earth” and, thus, the translation of the first interrogative clause would be as follows: “Who is that one dominating the heavens that came down?”

There is one general meaning of the verb אָסָף—“to collect what already exists uncollected.” In Numbers, the people in the desert “collect the quails” and in 21:16 Moses “gathers the people” before God (cf. Mic 2:12); and in 2 Sam 12:28, David “unites the army.” In Isa 33:4, the verb expresses the “amassing of the spoils,” while in Jer 8:13, אָסָף has the meaning of “picking the fruits.” In Judg 19:15, the construction מְאַסֵף־אוֹתָם means “host the people” and in 1 Chr 11:13 (meaning “recruiting the army”), while the meaning of וַיַאַסְפוּ־כֶּסֶף לָר ב in 2 Chr 24:11 (cf. 34:9) is “gain wealth.”

The primitive idea of the Hebrew noun רוח, as in the ancient Near Eastern conception, is invisible power: “air,” “wind,” “primal deep,” “infinite expanse” or “darkness.”

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128 It is difficult to understand as Ziegler (*Uebersetzung*, 354) claims that the questions invoke human Unmöglichkeiten, since the control over the earth and heaven is exclusively attributed to God.

129 Even though Crenshaw (“Clanging Symbols,” 51–64) unnecessarily suggests here the emendation to וַיָרֶּד (“one who is obtaining control”), the point of dominion seems adequately expressed by the sequence עָלָה ↘↗ וַיֵרַד.

The meaning of the noun in the MT must be construed from the context. The noun is usually self-standing, and besides its possessive genitives (רוּחַ־יְהוָה in Judg 3:10; 1 Sam 16:13; 1 Kgs 22:24; 2 Chr 12:23 or רוּחַ־גוֹלָל in Jon 1:4), in the other nineteen constructions with a preceding Maqqēph (besides the prepositions על or ב and the nouns כל and ה), it has the auxiliary function of narrowing the definitions of other nouns. Thus, in 1 Sam 1:15, קְשַת־רוּחַ could simply mean “wretch,” in Ps 34:19 as well as in Isa 66:2 נֶפֶשׁ־רוּחַ it would designate “brokenhearted” or in Prov 14:29 בֵּית־רוּחַ “fainthearted.” In Qoh 7:8 הוֹרָא־רוּחַ denotes the “conceited.” In Job 15:2 וְלָכֵי־רוּחַ and in 16:3, פְּרָי־רוּחַ means “nonsense.” By contrast, in Prov 16:19 and 29:23 (cf. Isa 57:13), מִרְאָא־רוּחַ designates the “humble one” and in 17:27 כְּרָא־רוּחַ the “serene one,” while in Qoh 7:8 חֶשְׁבוּ־רוּחַ denotes the “patient one” and in Prov 11:13 נְאָר־רוּחַ the “faithful one.” In addition, the construction מַחֲבֵא־רוּחַ in Isa 32:2 means “lee” (safeguard) and כַּנְפֵי־רוּחַ in 2 Sam 22:11 (cf. Ps 18:11) denotes the “divine vehicle.” Besides these uses, the noun רוּחַ occurs with verbs such as יצא, נחל, צפן, רעה. In Ps 135:7, the construction מִמְצַמְצָא־רוּחַ describes someone “who is the possessor and ruler of the wind” as a meteorological element. In Prov 11:29, יִנְחַל־רוּחַ refers to “inherit the wind” and in 27:16 שְׁלָמִים־רוּחַ designates “vanity.” In Jer 22:22, the phrase מִשְׁרֵי־רוּחַ denotes “desolation.” In the Book of Proverbs, the noun רוּחַ occurs eleven times by itself and 10 times in a construction with Maqqēph. In Prov 30:4, the noun is governed

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132 For uses of the term wind, natural phenomena, breath, mind, God’s Wind, see Fabry, “רוּחַ,” TDOT 13:374–86. For the different extra biblical approaches to wind as divine element, see Chapter Four of this dissertation.
by the verb אסף, while in the construction אסף־רווח means “putting in order what already exists on the earth.” Thus, the construction אסף־רווח expresses the act of “keeping the wind under control” or “restraining the wind.” Again, the disjunctive accent azlā leharmeh links together all the lexemes under its syntactical domain. The first encounter under the heavens is the wind and God’s action takes the place of “restraining the wind.”

The instrumental ב (cf. Exod 22:23; Mic 4:14; Longman, Proverbs, 523) is used here in connection with the action of the noun חפן, which is rare in the Bible in its regular dual form. There are only six occurrences of the plural “sweeping with the hand.” In Exod 9:8 and Lev 16:12, the noun goes with the verb לְָ֥קֵח (”scoop up”) and in Ezek 10:2 with מלא (“fill up”) or נשא and נתן (“lift up;” and “give” in 10:7). In Qoh 4:6, the difference is between “sweeping” by כף (“small volume by the fistful”) and “sweeping” by חפן (“large volume by the forearmful”). The term חפן in Prov 30:4 is

133 The LXX has understood the Hebrew word as a synonym of the following noun שמלת and reads the lexeme without the pronominal suffix as ἐν κόλπῳ (“in the bosom”). The LXX found here the Hebrew word בְָחָפְנָיו or בְָחֵיק (see further Meir Malul, “כפי [Ex 33,22] and חפני [Prov 30,4]: Hand or Skirt?” ZAW 109 [1997] 356–68, here 361) that it renders in Greek as ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ αὐτοῦ (“in his bosom” [or “in his garment”]. The Syr reads the Hebrew lexeme in the plural with the pronominal suffix as ב(cps)בב (“in the palms of his hand”). The Tg, following the Hebrew, has the plural of the Aramaic noun חפנוס with the pron. suff. of 3 fs נא (“in her [the wind’s] handfuls”), probably referring to the feminine noun רוח (cf. DIPA, 212), while the Vg reads the Hebrew plural form as manibus (“the hands,” so Michaelis, 98; Schneider, Sprüche, 159; Richter, “Agur,” 420). Doederlein (Sprüche, 185, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 354; Herder, 126; De Wette, 392; Delitzsch, Commentary, 273; Toy, Commentary, 521) reads here “in seine Faust” (“in his fist”) and Kamphausen (Sprüche, 386, as well as Ewald, 252; Wildeboer, 85; Oesterly, Proverbs, 273; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Fritsch and Schloerb, Proverbs, 948; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1255; Cox, Proverbs, 239; Plöger, Sprüche, 354; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 310; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 457; Seboq, Sprüche, 359) has “in seinen Fäusten” (“in his fists”). Meinhold (Sprüche, 494, as well as Moore, 100; Koptak, 651; Ross, 1119) translates descriptively: “in die Hohlflächen seiner Hände” (“in the hollows of his hands”). Franklin (“The Sayings,” 246) even more descriptively renders: “in his pocket,” while Longman (Proverbs, 523) translates his handful, and Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 850) “in his lap.”
closely related to the preceding construction אָסַף־רוּחַ and denotes an action requiring capability and strength, i.e., “restrain the violent nature of wind.” The strength of the subject is due not only to his fists or hands but also to the power of his forearms, which, with the preposition בְ, does not signify the spatial—“in his forearms,”134 but rather instrumental action—“with (the strength of) his forearms.” The pronominal suff. 3 ms characterizes the action not of gathering a fluid element in some place,135 but rather controlling with the hands, i.e., keeping the violence of the wind in check. The accent Pazer qaṭan, preceded by the ‘azlā lēgarmeh, constitutes the conclusion of two disjunctive accents. The translation of the second clause in v. 4 would thus be “who restrain the wind with (the strength of) his forearms.”

The root הֱֶצִּירָה is used extensively in the MT and its meaning goes from the literal and transitive meanings of “wrapping,” “tightening,” “slapping” or “closing” (Akk. sarāru—“wrapping;” cf. Exod 12:34; Josh 9:4; 1 Sam 25:29; 2 Sam 20:3; Job 26:8;


135The alternation of the noun חָפְן with the Ugaritic root ḫpn—lap, garment opened with Kevin J. Cathcart (“Proverbs 30,4 and Ugaritic ḫPN, ‘Garment,’” CBQ 32 [1970] 418–20 (see also the Cathcart version in VT 48 [1998] 264–65) is not necessary here because the lexeme חָפְן is neither the synonym of the following עִילִּית nor does it have the same function as עִילִּית. Thus, to focus the noun on the metaphorical meaning of the “skirt” (Cathcart) or lap-garment (Malul, “Hand or Skirt,” 356f) or even both “fists/clothing” (Rendsburg, “Hebrew Philological,” 187–95) seems to be a superficial emendation of the correct lexeme. In addition, the pronominal suffix “his” would be intelligible here and rendering text as “gather the wind in his garment” or even “his lap” would prevent the noun רוּחַ being a static element and not as dynamic as it is by its nature.

136The LXX uses the verb συστρέφω (“to twist up” of a whirlwind, cf. LSJ, 1736), which expresses the action of collecting or gathering the water above the earth and translates τις συνέστρεφεν ὄδωρ (“who twisted up the water”). The Syr has the equivalent expression with the same root related with the verb מִאִּית or מִאִית and translates מָאִית (“[who] tied up the waters”). The Targum also uses the same root as the Hebrew has מִאִית וְרוּחַ—(“[who] tied up the water?”). The Vg uses here the verb coligo and renders quis configavit aquas (“who manacled the waters”). Some scholars like Gemsler (Sprüche, 79; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Plöger, Sprüche, 354; Cathart, 418; Malul, “Hand or Skirt,” 360; Richter, “Agur,” 421; Sæbø, Sprüche, 359) read the noun in the singular as “water.”
Prov 4:2; 26:8; 30:4) to the developed and intransitive meaning of “clamp” (Job 18:7; 20:22; Pss 6:8; 7:5; Prov 4:2) or “delivering” (Jer 48:41; 49:22), “vexing” (Lev 18:18; 1 Sam 30:6; 2 Sam 13:2; 20:3; Isa 11:13; 25:4; 26:16; Hos 5:15; Zeph 1:17) or “oppressing” (Num 10:9; 25:17. 18; Pss 8:3; 10:5; 25:5; 31:12; 42:11; 74:11; 129:1. 2; 143:12). The verb צִרֹּר occurs three times in the Book of Proverbs in its meaning “tighten,” “compress” or “clasp” and it is in syntax with מַיִּם. The primordial accumulation of the waters in the OT is the sea, which is presented as the source of life (Gen 1:20; Job 8:11) and the place where life began before the earth appeared (Gen 1:21, 22). The collected waters under the heavens represent not only the sea but also include natural precipitation, which can cause disaster on the earth by flooding. A flood, according the OT, is not a natural phenomenon but the result of God’s bringing (בוא) the waters from below and from above over the surface of the earth (Gen 6:17). Thus, the tradition of primordial creation plays an essential role in the case of the waters, which God separates into the upper and lower (Gen 1:6), collecting the lower into the sea (Gen 1:9; Ps 33:7) and the upper into the clouds (Job 26:8). God frightens the upper and lower waters with the wind (Ps 77:17); they obey him (Pss 77:18. 20; 78:13) and he is glorified over them (Judg 5:4; 2 Sam 22:12; Pss 29:3; 93:4). To show his control over the waters, God unites, restricts and releases them (Gen

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141 For the relation of Prov 30:4 with the extrabiblical inscriptions, see Chapter Four of this dissertation.
Thus, the meaning of water as a ritual substance in Leviticus and water as the essential beverage in the Book of Deuteronomy or a life-giving source in First Isaiah is remarkably different from the mention of the waters that follow God’s theophany on earth (Judg 5:4; 2 Sam 22:12; Ps 29:3), the reaction of terrestrial waters to his coming (Job 26:5; 37:10; 38:30; Pss 18:16; 46:4; 74:13; 77:17) and God’s exclusive capacity to save man from מַיִּים רַבִּים (“the mighty waters,” cf. 2 Sam 22:17; Pss 18:17; 124:4; 143:7), מַשִּׁפְעַת־מַיִּים (“from deep-waters,” cf. Job 22:11; Ps 69:2, 3, 15, 16) and from שֵׁטֶּף מַיִּים (“the flood,” cf. Pss 32:6; 88:18; 124:4). In this regard, God, by controlling the waters (Job 12:15; Ps 147:18), controls nature in general (cf. Job 38:34; Ps 65:10; 107:33. 35). In the Book of Proverbs, the noun מַיִּים occurs 14 times with the prevalent meaning of the essential beverage for human life (5:15; 16; 9:17; 25:21, 25) or the essential element of the earth (30:16). In Prov 30:4, God’s action in descending from heaven (וַיֵרַד) is to summon the waters תַחַת הַשָמיִּים (“under the heavens,” cf. Gen 1:9; Ps 33:7; Job 28:25; 26:10) or to collect the waters above the earth (Job 26:8; Prov 30:4). It could seem that summoning the waters on the earth precedes bagging them over the earth but both actions are earth-centric and, thus, compatible. The wind, which God activates (Gen 8:1), is the main agent in drying out the earth (Exod 14:21; Job 26:10; Ps 136:6; 148:4), thus demonstrating its primordial

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143 In the general description of the flood in Genesis 7, the waters are released and freed again (cf. Gen 7:12). The main idea associated with the natural waters is their power, which can be controlled only by God.

144 The very significant role of the waters is also present in Exodus and Joshua where God performs miracles with the waters of Egyptian rivers (Exodus 7–8) or the river Jordan (Joshua 3–4; cf. 1 Kgs 2:14) and the waters of the sea (Exodus 14–15).

145 Besides these, water in the Book of Proverbs is generally divided as the part of earthly drinking water (8:24) or the sea (8:28). The waters are also used once as a distractive power (14:14) and four times as an allegorical component in daily-life comparisons (18:4; 20:5; 21:1; 27:19; cf. 2 Sam 5:20; 14:14).
role in creation, even of the powerful waters. The author of Prov 30:4 in a descending manner describes God’s action over the wind, the wind’s action over the water and, finally, the water’s action on the earth. Vis-à-vis the preceding action of the wind as an invisible element of air (v. 4b-ba), the action in v. 4c includes the visible and fluid elements of water. In addition, air is presented in the OT as an element of sense without weight (cf. 2 Kgs 3:17) and the waters are cited as a visible element that cannot be measured (cf. Job 28:25; Isa 40:12). Both elements play key roles in God’s primordial actions under the heavens and both have essential parts in human existence. Thus, in cosmic relations, the prevailing element is not מים but רוח, which sets limits to the waters (Gen 8:1; Exod 14:21). God’s collecting the waters on the earth and activating the waters of the heavens have to be understood as God’s action with רוח over מים (cf. Isa 40:12). Therefore, it is very difficult to view the construction צאר־مياه as referring to the collection of the sea (thus Doederlein, Sprüche, 185 and Ziegler, Neue Uebersetzung, 354), due to the ancients’ limited knowledge about the oceans. In addition, how could the ancients know about the many flowing rivers and springs that are not “bounded,” like the seas? Thus, the Semitic perception of watery boundaries on earth was general and undefined, while the “heavenly basin” of rainfall is regularly understood as an upper earthly reservoir solely under God’s control (cf. Herder, Herders sämtliche Werke, 126; Frankenberg, 160; Bertheau, Die Sprüche, 169; Wildeboer, Die Sprüche, 85; Ewald, Die Salômonischen, 250; De Wette, Die Sprüche, 392.) Richter (“Hielt,” 421) reads the collective plural מים as “Gewässer” (waters),

146 The primordial collection of the waters on the earth אל מקוםאחד (“into one place,” cf. Gen 1:9) is called ימים (“sea,” cf. Gen 1:10) that is determinative noun of מים on the earth.
which corresponds well to the understanding of an enormous quantity of water in one basin. The third ʿazlā lēḡarmeh closely links all three lexemes governing them to the following concluding morpheme. God’s second act under the heavens involves the raging waters upon the earth, which God “compresses.”

The preposition ב with the definite particle article ה indicates the localization of the noun מים (cf. Gen 12:6; 1 Kgs 12:27). The feminine noun שימל occurring thirty-five times in the MT, associated sometimes with the noun שמל ("wrapper," "mantel," cf. Exod 22:8; Ruth 4:20; Mic 2:8). The singular form of the noun signifies “female costume” (Deut 21:13; 22:5; Ruth 3:3) or “male garb” (Deut 22:5; 2 Sam 12:20), while the plural form generally refers to “garments,” as does the noun שמל (cf. Gen 37:34; 41:14; 44:13; 45:22; Exod 3:22; 12:35; 19:10; 24; Deut 10:18; Josh 7:6; Isa 4:1). The noun שימל also denotes valuable property, such as a tame animal (cf. Deut 22:3); food (Isa 3:7), which can be borrowed but has to be returned (cf. Exod 22:26). The noun also signifies precious gift (cf. 1 Kgs 10:25) or seized spoil (cf. 1 Sam 21:10; Isa 9:4). In the same way, שימל ("garment") is characteristic of the wealthiest people (Gideon’s mantle in

147 The LXX translates the Hebrew noun as ἱματιον ("garment"), in a general way expressing the manner of the rainfall’s storage. The Syr uses the word "napkin" here to express God’s power, who is capable to tie immense quantity of the water into שושפ ("the cloak"). The Tg reads בשושיפא from the root שושפ "(the cloak)" with the fem. suff.: “in her (water’s) cloak.” The Vg’s rendering quasi in vestimento would be translated as “the uniform” and, thus, approximately to the LXX, put the emphasis on the storage of the rainfall. Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 354, as well as Frankenber, Sprüche, 160; Wildeboer, 85; Delitzsch, Commentary, 273; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 456; Sæbø, Sprüche, 359) reads “Gewand” ("a vestment" or "robe") here, while Ewald (Die Salomonschen, 252) translates the lexeme as “Wolkengewande” ("cloud-garb"). Herder (Herders sämtliche Werke, 126) as well as De Wette (Die Sprüche, 392), translate the noun with “Kleid” ("a dress") while Schneider (Sprüche, 159) reads “die Hülle” ("the wrapper"). Richter ("Agur," 421) offers the as an alternative “the mantle;” Koptak (Proverbs, 651) and Ross (Proverbs, 1119) translate “the cloak,” Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 850) "garment."

148 The abnegation of the garb in OT is also identified with the renouncement of domestic idols in Gen 35:2.
Judg 8:25; the Philistine’s mantle in 1 Sam 21:10; the nobleman’s mantle in Isa 3:6) and, thus, had to be conspicuous and characterized by its size and ornamentation. In addition, the same garment was used as a kind of blanket with which people wrapped or covered themselves while sleeping (cf. Exod 22:26–27) or spread out as a bed sheet (cf. Deut 22:17). Also, the garment, characteristically of larger size than other clothing, served as a carrying bag, backpack (cf. Exod 12:34) or even casing (cf. 1 Sam 21:10). Thus, the original meaning of the noun שִּׂמְלָה as a wrapper or a clothing wrapper eventually took on the meaning of a bundle, bunch or bag. In the Book of Proverbs, the noun occurs only one time, in 30:4, with the same preposition as in 1 Sam 21:10 and in the singular form without a personal suffix (as is the case with Gideon’s mantel in Judg 8:25), where it denotes a load that can be held and transported. Thus, the meaning of the noun שִּׂמְלָה in Prov 30:4 is not exclusively a “garment,” especially not with the pronominal suffix וֹבַשִּׂמְלָת (“his garment,” thus Scott, Proverbs, 175 and Cathcart, “Proverbs 30.4,” 419) because it changes according to its function. The meaning of the noun in v. 4 is a “bundle” or “bunch” that is used to hold, keep or preserve its content, which usually does not have a container (cf. Job 26:8; Ezek 5:3).

The disjunctive accent רֶבְיָה ‘gadôl concludes the series of ’אצלוֹ לֶֽגֶרֶֽמֹה ואָבְאַר qatan and marks the quarter point within the verse. This particular word additionally

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149 Kaiser (Grundriß, 110) is correct when he compares שִׂמְלָה with the “sleeveless,” “fringed mantle,” which could be guessing here but the point is that the singular of שִׂמְלָה also refers to a mantle or cloak that differentiated the owner from “the common crowd.” By contrast, the noun מְעִיל is more specific and refers to the mantle of priests, kings, and princes (of Aaron in Exod 28:4, 31, 34; 29:5; 39:22, 23, 24, 25, 26; of priests in Lev 8:7; of Samuel in 1 Sam 2:19; 15:27; 28:14; of Ezra in 9:3, 5; of Job in 1:20; of Saul in 1 Sam 24:5; of Jonathan in 1 Sam 18:4; of David in 1 Chr 15:27). In addition, the noun מְעִיל refers to a king’s mantle (Josh 7:21, 24; Jon 3:6) or a prophet’s mantle (1 Kgs 19:13, 19; 2 Kgs 2:8, 13, 14; Zech 13:4). Cf. John N. Oswalt, The Book of Isaiah: Chapters 1–39 (NICOT; Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1986) 133, nn. 15—16.

explains the preceding noun מים, which it qualifies as water that is wrapped and moveable, not fixed like an ocean or the sea but moveable through the heaven by God and can be poured at a particular time on a particular place upon the earth. The translation of the fourth clause in v. 4 would be “who compresses the waters into a bundle?”

The perfect of the verb מִַּיִּים in the Hiph‘îl regularly precedes its direct object. When the object does not have physical or concrete existence, but rather represents an idea, vow, law or generally covenant, the meaning is “to establish” (Num 8:18; Deut 9:5) or “to fulfill” (1 Sam 15:11; 1 Kgs 12:5; 2 Kgs 23:24; 2 Chr 10:15; Jer 11:5; 44:24). When the object is a physical person, the meaning is “to raise up” children (Josh 9:5), judges (Judg 2:18), prophets (Jer 29:15) or enemies (1 Sam 22:8). When the object is a physical aspect, the verb in the Hiph‘îl assumes the meaning of “to erect,” “to place,” “to install” a memorial (Josh 4:9) or the tabernacle (Num 9:15). In the Book of Proverbs, the verb מים is infrequent, occurring only once in the Hiph‘îl form and nine times in the Qal. The Hiph‘îl of מים in Prov 30:4 does not denote an abstract concept,

151 In v. 4d, the LXX uses the verb κρατέω (“to dominate”) to express a capability of conquering and ruling over the earth. Phonetically similar and etymologically related to the Hebrew word is the Syriac expression אקְיים (“[who] established?”). The Tg also views a similar expression with its verb בָּני from בָּני in Hap‘êl pf. 3 ms with the meaning “to make stand.” The Vg’s expression is not about the “ruling” but rather the “establishing” of the earth, and the verb that is utilized here is suscitavit (“[who] raised up?”). Wildeboer (Die Sprüche, 85) translates the lexeme as “festgestellt” (“[who] established?”) and Plöger (Sprüche, 351) “festgesetzt” (“[who] fixed?”). Bertheau (Sprüche, 169) and Delitzsch (Commentary, 273) have the verb “aufrichten” (“to set up”) and Meinhold (Sprüche, 493) “richtete” (“[who] set?”) Barucq (Le livre des Proverbes, 220) reads here “qui a dressé toutes les limites de la terre?” (“who set up all the limits of the earth?”). Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 310) read “érigea” (“[who] erected?”), while Whybray (Proverbs, 409, as well as Moore, 99; Leeuwene, 248; Clifford, Proverbs, 259; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 457) have “who established,” as does Richter (“Agur,” 421) who reads “die Enden der Erde gegründet” (“[who] founded the ends of the earth?”). Steinmann (Proverbs, 589), and Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 850) have here “who set up,” and Sæbø (Sprüche, 360) “wer richtete alle Enden der Erde auf?” (“who set up all the ends of the earth?”).
but rather a concrete physical one as the object: the “installation” of earth to its extreme limits and, thus, has to be understood as God’s physical action as the Creator of the earth. The third action is God’s “spreading” of the earth.

The verb אָפֵס, as well as the noun אֶפֶּס, refers to scarcity or to the end of existence (Gen 47:15, 16; Deut 15:4; 2 Sam 9:3; 2 Kgs 14:26; Job 7:6; Ps 77:9; Prov 14:28; 26:20; Isa 16:4; 29:20; 34:12; 47:8, 10; Amos 6:10; 9:8; Zeph 2:15). The root אָפֵס also reflects a hyperbole of bodily extremities (Ezek 47:3; Dan 8:25) or the extremity of strength (Num 13:28) or even the exclusivity of the cited words (Num 22:35; 23:13). In short, the root refers to matters that do not exist beyond existing things and, thereby, denotes existence and nothingness (Isa 41:29; 45:6). When the verb אָפֵס occurs in close connection with the noun אֶרֶץ marked with the Maqqēph, the construction shows the magnitude of “God’s spreading” the earthly platform from its center to its extreme limits (Deut 33:17; 1 Sam 2:10; Pss 2:8; 22:28; 58:14; 67:8; 72:8; 89:3; Prov 30:4; Isa 52:10; Jer 16:19; Mic 5:3; Zech 9:10). Here, the disjunctive accent ‘政府采购 signifies a major division of the verse, which leads the theme toward the conclusion. Accordingly, the construction כָּל־אַפְסֵי־אֵָ֑רֶּץ should be translated as “all the extremities of the earth.”

The entire clause is as follows: “Who spread all the extremities of the earth?”

152 The LXX’s expression ἄκρος means “upper or higher thing” and eventually the edges of something (cf. LSJ, 57); its expression πάντων τῶν ἄκρων τῆς γῆς would be translated (“all of the edges of the earth”). The Syr translation is close to the LXX reading ܒܕܐܪܥܐܥܒܪܝܗ (“the borders of the earth”). The Vg, close to the LXX, reads terminos terrae (“ends of the earth”). Alternatively, the Tg utilizes another noun ביביריאתא or a shorter form ביבאבר (“the creation”) and reads: “who made to stand the creation on the earth?” Ewald (Die Salômonischen, 252) reads “…die Ende der Erde festgestellt habe?” (“[who] founded the ends of the earth?”), while Franklyn (“The Sayings,” 248) has: “who raises all the ends of the earth?”

153 The use of corners of the earth instead of extremities is not a good solution because of the modern influence about the conception of regularly the four corners of the earth. Instead, this is not about the geographic four earthly corners but rather the indefinite number of the extremities of the earth.
The interrogative impersonal pronoun stylistically emphasizes the subject, who has been referred to by the pronoun מִּי, asking not only the identity (אֱלֹהִים, אֱלֹהִים, אֲדֹנָי) but also of the character or personality (יהוה, אֱלֹהִים, אֱלֹהִים), as in Gen 24:3 ("the God of the heaven and the God of the earth"). Since the previously-mentioned acts are exclusive to God in the OT, the assumption seems logical that the question about the name, where the noun שֵם can also designate God (cf. Saadiah Gaon), refers to God here (pace Müntinghe, Die Sprüche, 72). The same question is posed in Exodus in God’s epiphany to Moses (Exod 3:13), and, thus, it is restricted to the particular name of God in the OT which is God (cf. Prov 30:9). Here, the Mêrêkâ is a conjunctive accent governing the מַה שָׁם to the following words. Thus, the translation of the question would be as follows: “What is his name?”

154 The LXX is close to the Hebrew: τί ονομα αὐτοῦ (“what is his name?”). In the same manner the Syr reads שמים און (“what is his name?”). The Vg also has the equivalent expression quod nomen eius (“what is his name?”). The Tg poses here a question of origin: שמה שם (“from where is his name?”). Bickell (“Kritische,” 293) offers here an addition to the interrogative clause: אד ל אה职业技术 הע (“I would ask (him) on behalf of God: what is his name?”). E. Ben Yehudah, (“The Edomite Language,” JSOP [Jerusalem, 1920–21] 113–15, here 114) recognizes in the interrogative pronoun the Edomite emphatic particle that can be translated or simply ignored. Ben Jehudah suggests translating the interrogative מַה emphatically as “harken!” or “look!” which corresponds to the contemporary Arabic emphatic particle mà.


156 Ginsburg and Weinberger, 619; BDB, 1028.

The circumstantial wāw introduces a detail about the preceding question in v. 4e, which should be answered together or should not be answered at all.\(^{159}\) The second interrogative impersonal pronoun is closely associated with the preceding question. If the asked about name is God, then the name of the son would refer to Adam (cf. v. 2) as God’s first human creature, who is the visible reality of God’s creation, and/or Israel as the privileged people who received a history and instruction about salvific creation.\(^{160}\) If humans are God’s creations, and if the average Israelite should know of God’s act of creation, then the question about the existence of God represents the categorical nonsense of the ungodly statement in v. 1. The Rēbīa ‘muğraš is the penultimate disjunctive accent, which precedes the final lēğarmeh on the following lexemes. The translation of the question is as follows: “... and what is the name of his son?”

\(^{158}\) The LXX follows the Hebrew with the exception of using a plural form of the noun בָּנָיו (“children”) instead of בְּנֵי (“what is the name of his children?”). The expression “children” hints at humans in general, as opposed to the sole Creator. The Syr is closer to the Hebrew: שְׁמֹא וֶאֵינָו (“and what is the name of his son?”). By contrast, the Tg once again asks about the origin of the subject: מִזְמַן וּמִהְלַך (”and from where is the name of his son?”). Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 160) and Ewald (Die Salōmonischen, 252) find here the son’s name, i.e., Logos (John 1:1), while Doederlein (Sprüche, 186, as well as Herder, 126 and Hensler, 288) sees here the “fellowman,” “student” or “an epigone of the wise or even prophet.” Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 72), in his rendering of the wider context, translates: „weißt du, ob jemand gefunden wird, der entweder selber die oben genannten Dinge verrichten kann oder jemand unter seiner Familie weiß, der dazu im Stande wäre” (“do you know if someone is found who by himself can do the above things, or knows someone in his family who would be able to do that?”). Hensler (Erklärungen, 288) claims that besides an alternative wāw (or) here, there is no possibility of another, especially not the conjunctive wāw (and).

\(^{159}\) Cf. B. L. Visotzky, The Midrash, 118; Skehan (Studies, 43) identifies the name being asked about as Jacob/Israel as the Lord’s first born (cf. Exod 4:22).
The final כִּי is emphatic here with the affirmative intention of answering all the previous four questions, presupposing comprehension (v. 2–3) and religious instruction (v. 4) and leading to the result with the affirmation “now, you should know this.” The Sôp pasûq shows the end of the verse. The translation of the last dependent clause would be “now you will know.”

161 Michaelis (Johann David Michaelis, 98, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 354; Herder, 126; Delitzsch, Commentary, 273; Oesterly, Proverbs, 522; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220; Richter, “Agur,” 421) see here an interrogative כִּי: “weißt du es?” (“do you know that?”). Alternatively, Frankenegg (Sprüche, 160) holds for a conditional particle: “wenn du es weisst?” (“if you know that?”). Bunsen (Vollständiges, 180, as well as Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 850) translates the particle with a casual declaration: “den du weißt es” (“for you know that”). Bertheau (Die Sprüche, 169; Schneider, Sprüche, 159; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1255; Plöger, Sprüche, 354) reads a conditional wāw: “wenn du es weißt?” (“when (if) you know it?”). In a similar manner Lipiński (“Peninna,” 75): “puisqué tu le sais?” (“since you know it?”) and Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 310): “peut-être le sais-tu?” (“perhaps you know?”). In addition, Kamphausen (Sprüche, 386) and Ewald (Die Salōmonischen, 250) see here the clarifying wāw: “daß du es wüßtest?” (“that you knew it?”) and De Wette (Die Sprüche, 392, as well as Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Meinhold, Sprüche, 494) opt for an emphatic interrogative expression: “Weißt du das wohl?” (“do you indeed know that?”), while Sæbø (Sprüche, 360) has an emphatic declarative expression: “ja, du weißt es” (“yes, you know that!”). Koptak (Proverbs, 65) and Ross (Proverbs, 1119) introduce here a verbal conditional phrase: “tell me if you know!” Toy (Commentary, 522, as well as Fritsch and Schloerb, Proverbs, 948; Schoors, “The Particle ki,” 244; Cox, Proverbs, 239; Franklyn, 248; Whybray, 408; Moore, 100; Leeuwene, 248) translates the particle as an asseverative “surely.” Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 599) appeal here to the assertive sentence in Job 38:5 reading: “se sei tu a saperlo, già lo sai” (“if you are that one who knows, you already know”). Because of the closeness of the last part of v. 4 to Job 38:5 and also because the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus Greek manuscripts omit the very last part of the MT Prov 30:4, Clifford (Proverbs, 259–260) does not translate תֵדִע כִּי because “its presence here spoils the sense, for Agur, not God, is the questioner.”

162 The LXX understood as one of the clause here with the final conjunction ἢνα [in Latin is ut] (Smyth’s Greek Grammar, §2193) and translates consequently ἢνα γνῶς (“[who are you] that you would know…”). For its part, the Vg does not use a particle of purpose dependent on a conditional ut but rather the subjunctive conditional conjunction si (ɕaːv) and translates si nosti (“[who is he] if you know?”). The Syr has an equivalent expression with the emphatic personal pronoun ܐܢܬ ܝܕܥ ܐܢܬ ܐܢ (“if you know you [that?]”). The Tg also reads ידעת ינא (“if you know?”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 186) translates here: “weist du es? (“do you know that?”) and Bertheau (Die Sprüche, 169) epexegetically adds a pronominal suffix to the verb, thus ידעתך: “dass du ihn kennest!” (“that you would know him?”).
The construction of three nouns, where the name of God appears again, opens the literal segment of the theology in God’s revealing and truthful words. The singular forms of the nouns in the construction emphasize God’s every saying or everything God says as a contrasting idea (“instead…”) to the religious doubt in v. 1 and as a theological alternative (“every…”) to what is humanly inaccessible in v. 3. The

163 The LXX translates the Hebrew phrase literally as πάντες λόγοι θεοῦ (“all the words of God”). The Syr reads similarly: ṯαὶ ἡμοῦ ἁλαλότα (“all the sayings of God”), as does the Tg: אַלָּמָא וְאֵלֶּהוֹ (“as well as the words”). The Vg’s translation which is in the singular omnis sermo Dei (“every word of God”) does not put the emphasis on any particular word of God but on general context of God’s revealing words. Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58) follows the Syr and Tg expressions “Alles was Jehova sagt” (“all that God says”). Grätz (“Exegetische, 436) sees in the noun ṭאָיְרַה (“die Lehre” (“the teaching”), while Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 310) render “toute déclaration de ELOHA” (“every statement of God”) and Franklyn (“The Sayings,” 248) “every promise of God.” Hensler (Erklärungen, 289) reads a verbal clause here “Was Gott sprach, ist alles…” (“what God says, is everything…”) and Scott (Proverbs, 175): “everything God says.” Doederlein (Sprüche, 186, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 355; De Wette, 393) similarly reads “Alle Aussprüche Gottes” (“every utterance of God”) and Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 858): “the entire utterance of God.” Bunsen (Vollständiges, 180, as well as Delitzsch, Commentary, 279; Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386; Gemser, Sprüche, 80) also reads “Alle Rede Gottes” (“all speech of God…”), as do Herder (Herders sämmtliche Werke, 127): “die Rede Gottes sind alle…” and Ewald (Die Salomonischen, 250) emphatically translates: “Alle die Worte Gottes” (“all of God’s words”). Alternatively, Frankenberg (Sprüche, 160) follows the Vg in translating “Jegliches Wort Gottes” (“any word of God”) and Schneider (Sprüche, 159) reads “Jedes Wort Gottes” (“every word’s word”) as well as Sauer (Sprüche, 100) “ein jedes Wort” and Barucq (Le livre des Proverbes, 220) “toute parole de Dieu” (“every word of God”) and Pié y Ninot (La Palabra, 83) “toda palabra de Dios.” The singular translation also follows Toy (Commentary, 522) as well as Oesterley (Proverbs, 270), McKane (Proverbs, 648), Moore (“A Home,” 100), Murphy (Proverbs, 225), Clifford (Proverbs, 259), and Steimann, (Proverbs, 592).

164 The ancient translations struggle to comprehend the הַמַּמֵּרָה and separate the participle הָמְרַמֵּרָה from the following noun מַמֵּרָה using two independent clauses. Thus, the LXX’s part. pf. pass. in nom. mp of παραγωμένα functions as the predicate of λόγοι θεοῦ (“God’s words that are tried by fire”), which alludes to the Hebrew word for “smelting” (Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220 follows the same translation). The Vg for the Hebrew participle reads the adjective ignitus, which also alludes to “fire” and the process of smelting. The Syr instead has here a dual adjective הָמַרַמֵּרָה (“which are pure”), while the Tg, following the Hebrew, reads an adjective in plural form הָמַרְמַרִים (“which are pure”). Scholars like Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58) and Doederlein (Sprüche, 186, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 355; Delitzsch, Commentary, 278; Toy, Commentary, 522) prefer to read here the adjective rein (“pure”) or lautere Wahrheit (“the pure truth,” cf. Schneider, Sprüche, 159), while Ewald, (Die Salomonischen, 250, as well as De Wette, 393; Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 160; Sauer, Sprüche, 100; Cox, Proverbs, 238; Fox, 858) reads here the adjective geläutert (“refined”) and Herder (Herders sämmtliche Werke, 127) adds a noun gefälscht Gold (“refined gold”). Gemser (Sprüche, 80; same Oesterley, Proverbs, 270) renders “durchläuterter” (“tried”) and Hensler (Erklärungen, 289; same Franklyn, 248. Moore, 100; Clifford, Proverbs, 259) simply reads “wahr” (“true”) as does Whybray (Proverbs, 411): “proves true,” while Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 309) have “éprouvé” (“proved”). In addition, Scott (Proverbs, 175) reads “stood the test” and Murphy (Proverbs, 229) “tested: everyword of…” Alternatively, Pié y Ninot (La palabra, 83) has “es acendrada” (“unblemished”) here and Garrett (Proverbs, 236) “flawless.”
expression is focused on כָּל־דִּבְרֵי יְהוָה ("all God’s words") found in Exod 24:4 and regularly refers to the words which God already uttered (cf. Gen 12:9; 26:9; Exod 33:12; Num 11:21; 1 Kgs 1:24; Neh 9:23; Job 33:8; Pss 16:2; 105:19; Jer 32:25). The verbal noun אִמְרָה usually relates to God (cf. 2 Sam 22:31; Pss 12:7; 17:31; 105:19; Isa 5:24; 28:22; Lam 2:17) and only once to 'El (Ps 17:6). In addition, the noun אִמְרָה is a Yahwistic theological term and closely related to God’s voice (Gen 4:23), which has to be placed into the human heart (Ps 119:38, 133), respected (Ps 119:38, 133), observed (Pss 119:50, 60, 140, 162, 172; 147:15) and believed (Pss 119:41, 58, 76, 82, 103, 116, 154, 170; 138:2; Isa 32:9). The lexeme אִמְרָה is found only here in the Book of Proverbs and denotes “God’s every announcement” that stands in contrast with נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר—"the master’s (purely human) false announcement" in v. 1. The word הָלוֹא in the MT describes God who can be rejected (Deut. 32:15, 17; 17:31; 32:15; Job 12:6; 33:12; 40:2; Ps 50:22; 139:19; Isa. 44:8; Hab 1:11), and can himself reject (Job 3:4, 23; 5:17; 6:8; 11:5, 6, 7; 12:4; 15:2; 24:12; 27:8, 10; 29:2, 4), God who condemns and punishes (Job 4:9; 6:4, 9, 13; 10:2; 19:6, 21; 21:9, 19; 31:2) and God who needs time if he is to be merciful again (Neh 9:17; Job 4:17; 19:26; 22:12, 26; 31:6; 33:26; 37:22; Hab 3:3). The last syllable, ah, of the noun הָלוֹא (əlaeh) resembles the first syllable, yah, of הוהי, and, therefore, can serve here as an abbreviation for הוהי אלוהים (cf. Mühlau, 41; 165 Of all the thirty-seven expressions to denote God’s functions among the People, noun אִמְרָה in the MT, the most conspicuous usage of the word is found in Psalm 119 (nineteen times) where the urgency of observing Yhwh’s word is attested. Cf. Mitchell Dahood, Psalms 101–150 (AYBC; New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2007) 172–93. 166 Of all fifty-eight uses of the noun הָלוֹא in the MT, the Book of Job contains forty-one verses where the name הוהי is found.
The usage of the proper noun אֱלֹהַּ here is intentional and replaces יהוה (cf. 2 Sam 22:31; Pss 18:31; 119:14, 140) in order to relate the theological message to the denial of לא, in v. 1 and to emphasize the concluding statement with the name of יהוה in v. 9 (cf. Ps 18:32). All the lexemes are stressed by the conjunctive strong accent Mūnah, which also suggests a close relationship with the following words. The verb צְרוּפֵָ֑ה אֱלֹהַּ refers regularly to a craftsman’s melting of metals (cf. Isa 40:19; Jer 6:29), especially קָסָם (“silver”) and גָּב (“gold,” cf. Pss 12:7; 66:10; Isa 40:19; 41:7; 48:10; Jer 10:9; Zech 13:9; Mal 3:3) and via the cognate verb כָּבַס (“be washed,” cf. Ps 51:9; Mal 3:2) is related to the verbs זָקַק (“be refined,” cf. 1 Chr 28:18; Job 36:27; Ps 12:7; Isa 25:6; Mal 3:3) and בָּרֵר (“be purified,” cf. Dan 11:35; 12:10), as well as to טָהֵר (“be clean,” cf. Mal 3:3) and לבן (“be white,” or “clean,” cf. Dan 11:35; 12:10). Thus, the verb regularly refers to the process of smelting and refining metal. Smelting and refining necessarily include molding and, therefore, can also metaphorically refer to the correction and remodulation of human behavior or a reprimand in the spiritual life (cf. Pss 26:2; 105:19). Thus, the translation of the participle would read “be shaped properly” or “be appropriate.” The translation of the clause is emphatic: “(Instead) every announcement of God is appropriate.”

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167 Samuel Terrien (The Psalms I, 201) refers the noun אֱלֹהַּ to the foreign provenience (cf. 2 Kgs 17:3; Dan 11:37; Hab 1:11); McKane, Proverbs, 647–49.
168 The rare and uncertain is when the verb stands alone: צְרוּפֵָ֑ה אֱלֹהַּ (Ps 119:140).
Grätz (“Exegetische,” 436) reads the lexemes מָגֵן and צְרוּפָה as synonyms of חֵלֶל (“instruction”). The the noun מָגֵן is ambivalent in the MT and can reflect either a literal or a metaphorical meaning. The literal meaning is always a “shield,” as a sign of an army’s power and victory (cf. Judg 5:8; 2 Sam 1:21; Isa 21:5; 22:6; Jer 46:3, 4; Ezek 27:10; 38:4, 5; 39:9; Neh 2:4) and usually comes first among other military equipment, such as מָגֵן (“bow”), לֶאָשֶׁה (“lance”), דָּגוֹב (“helmet”) or מַחֲלֵית (“armor”) (cf. 1 Chr 5:18; 2 Chr 14:17; 17:17; 23:9; 26:4 Neh 4:10). However, the metaphorical meaning is dominant in the MT, describing God as the shield or protector of the just (cf. Pss 3:4; 7:11; 18:3, 31, 36; 28:7; 33:20; 35:2; 47:10; 59:12; 84:10, 12; 89:19; 115:9, 10, 11; 144:2). The noun מָגֵן is classified in the MT together with בְּשָׁם and קֶשֶׁת as a precious treasure (cf. 2 Chr 32:27). In the Book of

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169 In the LXX, the Hebrew noun is translated by the verb ὑπερασπιζόω with the meaning “assure the defense of” (cf. D’Hamonville, Les Proverbes, 298). Here, the verb is in singular, ὑπερασπιζόμενον and does not connect with the subjective genitive θεοῦ, but rather to the subject ἐκεῖον turned into the singular: “it take defense.” The Syr separates the Hebrew construct state מָגֵן מַחֲלֵית with the conjunctive wāw and reads μάχημα (“and leading to life”). In a similar manner, the Tg utilizes the participle מַחֲלֶית (“and aiding…”). The Vg takes the Hebrew construct state מָגֵן מַחֲלֶית as a military term and translates: ignitus clypeus est (“the red-hot shield”) as proof of the consistency and protection of God’s word (cf. also the Latin translation of Nah 2:4). Bunsen (Vollständiges, 180; Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386; Schneider, Sprüche, 159) sees here a metaphor, i.e., “die Zuflucht” (“the recourse” or “refuge”), while Delitzsch (Commentary, 278, Toy, Commentary, 522; Oesterley, Proverbs, 270; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220; Sauer, Sprüche, 100; Pié y Ninot, La Palabra, 83; Franklyn, 248; Moore, 100; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 309; Murphy, Proverbs, 225; Clifford, Proverbs, 259) reads “shield,” and Scott (Proverbs, 175), with the pronominal suffix “their shield.”

170 The personal pronoun ὡς is related to God rather than to the construct form “the announcement of God.” The LXX reads here αὐτοῦ (“he”). The Vg, Syr and Tg do not mention this pronoun explicitly but suppose it. German scholars mostly introduce here an independent clause with “Er…” (“He…” or “God…,” cf. Müntinghe, Die Sprüche, 58; Doederlein, Sprüche, 186; Ziegler, Übersetzung, 355; Hensler, 289; Bunsen, Vollständiges, 180; Ewald, 250; De Wette, 393; Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 160; Schneider, Sprüche, 159), as do also English (Toy, Commentary, 522; Oesterley, Proverbs, 270; Scott, 175; Cox, Proverbs, 238; Franklyn, 248; Garrett, Proverbs, 236; Moore, 100; Steinmann, Proverbs, 592), French (Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 309), Italian, and Spanish (Pié y Ninot, La Palabra, 83; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbii, 601) commentators.

171 Again, one of the nouns that regularly accompanies the Tetragrammaton יהוה is widely utilized in Psalms and twice in Proverbs (2:7 and 30:5).
Proverbs, its usage is primarily Yahwistic (regularly accompanies the tetragramaton יהוה, cf. Prov 2:7; 30:5) and metaphorical (Prov 6:11; 24:32). There are only three places in the MT where the nouns צְפוּרָה and מָגֵן stand together (cf. 2 Sam 22:31; Ps 18:31; Prov 30:5). For the author of Prov 30:5a, the emphasis is on “God’s every announcement” (cf. Deut 4:35; 2 Sam 7:28). The independent personal pronoun הוא additionally supports the relation between God’s words and God’s actions among his People. The translation of the first part of v. 5 is as follows: “(Instead,) every announcement of God is appropriate. He is life-saving armor.”

The verb, the part. mp of נָחַשׁ (“take refuge, “shelter,” “recourse”) is regularly in the Qal followed by a noun such as צָרוּת (2 Sam 22:37; 2 Sam 22:3; Ps 18:3), צֶל (“shade,” cf. Judg 9:15; Isa 30:2), כָּנָף (“wing,” Ruth 2:12; Pss 36:8; 57:2; 119:116)

The elaboration of Ps 18:31 = 2 Sam. 22:31 by the author of Proverbs 30 is remarkable. The cumulative noun כל (“all”) is moved to singular אִמְרַת (“every pronouncement,” while the instrumental לְ takes the place of the article ה of the participle חסי and thus reads not “to all who shelter in him” (as 2 Samuel and Psalm do), but “every word of God” has the same power and importance:

(Prov 30:5)

The LXX takes τῶν εὐλαβουμένων αὐτῶν as the objective genitive of ὑπερασπίζει and translates “to those who respect him,” while the Vg takes as the subject omnis sermo Dei in the first sentence and reads its object as the personal pronoun sperratibus in se (“to those who rely on him”). The Syr also sees God rather than words of God as the object: غل وحاسنة (2 Sam 22:31) (Ps 18:31)

The Tg’s translation have here “die auf ihm trauen” (“those who trust in him”), while Gemser (Sprüche, 80; and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 601; Franklyn, 248: Moore, 100; Garrett, 236, ) reads “die bei ihm Zuflucht suchen” (“those who seek refuge with him”). Ewald (p. 250, as well as Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220) has “an ihn sich schliessenden” “those who attach themselves to him”), and Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 309) read “qui s’abrite derrière lui” (“those who take shelter behind him”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 186) sees the construction here and reads “er belohnt seine Verehrer” (“he rewarded his devotés”).Frankenberg (Sprüche, 160) and Sauer (Sprüche, 100; likewise Toy, Commentary, 522; Oesterley, Proverbs, 268; Scott, Proverbs, 175; Murphy, Proverbs, 225; Clifford, Proverbs, 259) in line with the Tg’s translation have here “die auf ihm trauen” (“those who trust in him”).
61:5; 91:4) or מָגֵן (“shield,” cf. 2 Sam 22:31; Pss 18:3; 31; 144:2). However, the most frequent connection of the verb חסי is to the name יהוה (cf. Pss 2:12; 5:12; 7:2; 11:1; 16:1; 25:20; 31:2; 20; 34:23; 64:11; 71:1; 118:8, 9; 141:8; Isa 14:32; 57:13; Nah 1:7; Zap 3:12) and once לא (“God,” cf. Ps 17:7). The Book of Proverbs uses the verb חסי twice. Its first occurrence in Prov 14:32 speaks of the refuge of the just in יהוה (“his Maker,” cf. 14:31) who is יהוה (14:2) and here in Prov 30:5 it is used as a term for God’s protection. The preposition ב refers to an agent here (cf. Gen 9:6; Num 36:2.) The concluding סֹפֶּה pasiüq on ב—the last particle with the 3 ms pron. suffix—closes the verse, which would be read as follows: “(Instead) every announcement of God is appropriate. He is the life-saving armor for those protected by him.”

174 The verb חסי regularly accompany the Tetragrammaton. The verb חסי does not appear in the Books of Job, Jeremiah and Ezekiel.

175 The LXX and Syr utilize the same verb also in Prov 2:8, replacing the Hebrew ketiv/qere חָסִיד (“pious”) with the verb חסי (“take refuge”). Cook (The Septuagint, 122; cf. also p. 151) claims that the Greek translator, “in line with his general approach, related the two passages (Prov 2:8 and 30:5) and he interpreted the Hebrew in the present context as coming from חסה.”
The prohibitive particle לא with the irregular declarative Hiph‘îl juss. לא תוסף is used “with the second person imperfect in negative commands” and forbids something that cannot or should not happen: “Do not add!” (Exod 34:3; Deut 3:26; Prov 3:7; Job 15:31). The anomalous Hiph‘îl of the verb יוסף where תוסף is the apocopated form of יסף(1)ן is the expected form (cf. Deut 3:26). The mute closes the syllable and the final š̄âw̄ comes somewhat nearer to a vocal š̄âw̄ ... and the final mute of itself attracts a slight vowel sound.” The jussive with the negation is used to forbid the manipulation (cf. Fox, 859) or distortion (cf. Ps 19:14; Hos 9:1) of divine words. The accent Mêrêkâ shows a strong conjunctive connection with the following noun, which usually denotes a condition that leads to a conclusion (cf. “without my obtaining human qualities…” in v. 3), which should be translated as follows: “Do not distort...”

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176 The LXX reads the negation of the Hebrew Hiph‘îl imperfect as the aorist subjunctive: μὴ προσθῇς. The negation μὴ with the subjunctive “indicates fear and warning, or suggests danger and thus should be understood as “you do not try to add,” where a distortion of God’s word is implied. Cf. W. Smyth, Greek Grammar (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1984) §1802. The Vg offers a similar translation with the imperative ne addas (“do not add!”). The Syr follows the Hebrew syntactical composition, using the same root אע and reads אעך לא (“do not append!”). The Tg does the same: לא תוסף לא (“do not append!”). Hiller (“Index,” n. 5 of Prov 30:6) explains the verb as follows ne addas neque adijicias ad verba ejus vel ne addas neque perdas verba ejus—“do not add to or adjust to his word or do not add or omit his word.” Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58; Delitzsch, Commentary, 278; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 160; Sauer, Sprüche, 100; Schneider, Sprüche, 159; likewise Toy, Commentary, 522; Oesterley, Proverbs, 270; Scott, Proverbs, 179; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220; Cox, Proverbs, 238; Franklyn, 248; Moore, 101; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 601; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 309; Murphy, Proverbs, 225; Clifford, Proverbs, 259; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 858; Steinmann, Proverbs, 592) reads “füge nicht” (“do not add!”) Doederlein (Sprüchei, 186) is much more determinative: “Mache keine Zusätze” (“do not make any additions!”), while Bunsen (Vollständiges, 180; Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 356; Ewald, 250; De Wette, 393; Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386) reads “tue nichts” (“do nothing!”).

177 Seow, Grammar, 209.
178 GKC, §109c.
179 Cf. GKC, §69v.
180 GKC, §10k.
The object of the jussive prohibition is a repetition of the main subject of the previous clause, כָל־אִּמְרַת, which denotes here an emphatically commanded obligation with the preposition עַל, which vis-à-vis the particle preposition (לְ) "to his words," cf. Job 16:3) or direct object אֵת (אֶת־דְבָרֵיו—"his words," cf. Ps 105:28), is more determinative: "On his words, over his words, in addition to his words" (cf. Gen 28:9; 30:40; 37:8). This plural form invokes the idea of the previous verse, in which a particular divine word is not mentioned, but rather the totality of the revealed words (cf. Deut 4:2; 12:32). The strong disjunctive accent אַנָּה marks the principal division of the first half of the verse, which would be translated as follows: "Do not distort his words."

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181 The LXX translates the Hebrew particle עַל with the Dative phrase: τοῖς λόγοις αὐτοῦ ("to his words"). The Syr follows the Hebrew construction מָלָיו ("on his words"). The Tg does the same: על וילו ("on his words"). Instead, the Latin expression quicquam (דָבָר) verbis illius (אָלַי וְלָלָיו) as "any matter to his words" contains a warning against a misconception or misinterpretation of the revealed word. Doederlein (Sprüche, 186) instead of the usual translation "seinen Worten" ("his words," cf. also Müntinghe, Die Sprüche, 58; Bunsen, Vollständiges, 180; De Wette, 393; Ewald, 250) reads "seinen Lehren" ("his doctrines") and Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 356) "seine Sprüchen" ("his proverbs").

182 Cf. GKC, §119aa.

183 Thus, Gen 37:8b should be read: "Thus, they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words." Wenham translates the construction לעל־דְבָרְיו with the verbal form: "…and for what he said." Gordon Wenham, Genesis 16–50 (WBC 2; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2000) 346.

The negative purpose clause with פֶּן־יוֹכִִּיחַ provides the motivation for the following reaction with the Hiph‘îl causative form of the verb הָכָּח (“to reprove”), and with the strong particle preposition of confrontation בְּ (בְךָ—“in front of you”) instead of בַּא (―“you,” cf. Job 13:10). The verb assumes something that is well-grounded or something that is clear and conclusive. The מֶרֶךְ on פֶּן־יוֹכִִּיחַ indicates the conjunctive accent with the following noun, as well as the מֻנָה on בְךָ, which leads to the concluding word of the verse that would be read as “lest he reprove you.”

185 The LXX follows the idea of warning and again translates the verb with a conjunctive: ἵνα μὴ ἔλεγξῃ σε (“that He might not reprove you”). The Tg closely follows the Hebrew expression, translating the conjunction פֶּן with the relative particle ד and reads בך יכסיף דלא (“that he might not rebuke your insight”). The Syr similarly translatesܢܟܣܟܕܠܐ (“that he might not rebuke you”). The Vg renders the causative verb הָכָּח with the passive arguaris (“lest you should be reproved”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58; Bunsen, Vollständiges, 180; Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 356; Ewald, 250; Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386) translates the dependent sentence progressively: “dass er dich nicht strafe” (“that he not reprove you”) and Doederlein (Sprüche, 186) conditionally translates: “du könntest wenn er Untersuchung gegen dich anstellt” (“you would have known, when he set an investigation against you...”). A similar intention is found by Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 601), who read “perché ti replicherà” (“because he will replicate you”). De Wette (p. 393, as well as Frankenberg, Sprüche, 160; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Toy, Commentary, 522; Oesterley, Proverbs, 270; Scott, Proverbs, 175; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220; Cox, Proverbs, 239; Franklyn, 248; Garrett, Proverbs, 236; Moore, 101; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 309; Murphy, Proverbs, 225) utilizes here a consequential conjunction “damit er dich nicht überführe” (“lest he reprove you”), while Sauer (Sprüche, 100): “damit er dich nicht zu Rechenschaf zieht” (“lest he drag you to justice”), and Schneider (Sprüche, 159), and Steinmann, (Proverbs, 589) read “sonst zieht er dich” (“otherwise, he draws you [he will correct you]”). Delitzsch’s translation (Commentary, 278) is more emphatic, “lest he convict you,” and Clifford’s rendering (Proverbs, 259) is causative, “lest he accuse you.”
The particle **wāw** is copulative here (cf. Bunsen, *Vollständiges*, 180; Frankenberg, *Die Sprüche*, 160; Ewald, *Die Salômonischen*, 250; Toy, *Commentary*, 522; Murphy, *Proverbs*, 225; Clifford, *Proverbs*, 259). The noun **כזב** (“lie”) is more common (twenty-nine times in the MT) than the verb **כזב** which occurs only once in the Qal: “to lie” (Ps 116:11), once in the Hiph‘îl: “make a liar” (Job 24:25), twice in the Nip‘h‘al: “proved oneself to be a liar or deceptive” and twelve times in the Pi‘êl forms: “to lie” (Num 23:19; 2 Kgs 4:16; Job 6:28; 34:6; 78:36; Ps 89:36; Prov 14:5; 57:11; Isa 58:11; Ezek 13:11; Mic 2:11; Hab 2:3). The verb appears only twice in the Book of Proverbs in the Pi‘êl (Prov 14:5) and once in the Nip‘h‘al (Prov 30:6). The Nip‘h‘al *tolerativum* is reflexive, “expressing the action which the subject allows to happen to himself.” The first *Petuhah* indicates the Masoretic conclusion of the textual unit and the opening of a new segment, and is not used here to mark a division but primarily as the introduction to the following prayer. The translation of v. 6 is as follows: “Do not distort his words...

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186 The LXX continues with the subjunctive, translating the Hebrew lexeme with an additional auxiliary adjective used as a substantive: καὶ ψευδῆς γένῃ (“and you might become a liar”). The Syr follows the Hebrew syntax, translating the verb with the Ethpe‘el ܘܬܬܟܕܒ (“and you be found to be a liar”). The Tg has the alternative form ܘܬܬܐ ܬܕܒ (“and you would show yourself a liar”). Also, the Vg translates the Hebrew verb with the passive and an additional object *inveniarisque mendax* (“and you be found to be a liar”). German scholars regularly translate the verb as a noun “der Lügner” (“the liar,” cf. Müntinghe, *Die Sprüche*, 58; Doederlein, *Sprüche*, 186; Hensler, 290; Ewald, 250; De Wette, 393; Ziegler, *Uebersetzung*, 356; Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 278; Frankenberg, *Sprüche*, 160; Sauer, *Sprüche*, 100; Ringgren and Zimmerli, 115; Schneider, *Sprüche*, 159) as do English (Toy, *Commentary*, 522; Oesterley, *Proverbs*, 270; Scott, *Proverbs*, 175; Plaut, *Proverbs*, 301; Franklyn, 248; Moore, 101; Murphy, *Proverbs*, 225; Clifford, *Proverbs*, 259; Fox, *Proverbs 10–31*, 858; Steinmann, *Proverbs*, 589), French (Barucq, *Le livre des Proverbes*, 220; Lelièvre and Maillot, *Commentaire 19–31*, 309) and Spanish (Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, *I proverbi*, 601) scholars.

187 Müntinghe (*Die Sprüche*, 58) reads a conditional **wāw** here “wenn” (“if”), Doederlein (*Sprüche*, 186) a comparative “als” (“as”), while Hensler (p. 290) and Kamphausen (*Sprüche*, 368) see the resulativitive **wāw** “dass du…” (“so that you”).

188 Cf. Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1160 n. 9(1).

189 GKC, §51c.
lest he reprove you and you would prove yourself to be deceptive."

The feminine gender of the direct object שְַ֭תַיִּם as a shorter form of שְנָתַיִּם regularly refers to a request, as does the feminine form of the number one (Pss 62:12; 27:4). 191

“The numerals are generally adjectives, but are basically substantives,” which specify the quantity of matter comprising two pairs (cf. Isa 51:18). 192 Here, the verb שאלה points to two different petitions. The prepositive דֶּהַ on שְַ֭תַיִּם and the conjunctive accent מינָה underscore the close relation between the stressed word and the following lexeme: “Two I ask.”

Two prepositions, one the genitive מֵאִּתָ ("from") with the preposition על ("near;") "with"), placed together with the pron. suff. 2 fs in the pausal form מֵאִּתִּים instead of the 2 ms מֵאִּתְ (cf. 2 Sam 3:13) or the later colloquial Hebrew form מֵאִּתָ ("from you,” cf. 1 Kgs 20:25) 194 are related to the pausal form מֵאִּתִּים here (cf. 1 Kgs 2:16).

190 The LXX opens a new clause with the indicative present: δόο αἰτοῦμαι (παρὰ σου) (“two I ask [from you”). A similar translation is found in the Vg: duo rogavi te (“two I asked you”). The Syr follows the Hebrew feminine form שְתַיִּם (“two I have requested”). The Tg does the same with שְנָתַיִּם. Scholars such as Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58) and Doederlein (Sprüche, 187) insert an object here “Zwei Sachen bitt ich” (“Two things I ask”) or “Zwei Stücke erbitte ich” (“Two portions I request”) Hensler (p. 290, as well as Herder, 128; Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386; Sauer, Sprüche, 160; Toy, Commentary, 524; Oesterley, Proverbs, 272; Scott, Proverbs, 175; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220; Moore, 101; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 603; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 309; Murphy, Proverbs, 225; Clifford, Proverbs, 259 ) translates “Zwei Dinge habe ich mir von dir erbeten” (“two things I have asked from you”) as does Ziegler, (Uebersetzung, 356); “Zwei Dinge bitte ich von dir,” while Frankenberg (Sprüche, 161; also Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115) have “Zweierlei bitte ich” (“two I ask”) and Ewald (p. 250) “Ein Doppeltes” (“a double thing”).

191 Cf. GKC, §97b1.


193 The LXX uses the personal complement παρὰ σοῦ (“from you”), which regularly is not refused (cf. 1Sam 2:15; 2 Sam 3:13; 1 Kgs 2:16). The Vg reads here the accusative object te (“you”). The Syr follows the Hebrew construction with its preposition על with the pronominal suffix מן (“from you”). The Tg does the same with מינָה.

194 Cf. GKC, §103b.
The Hebrew might also have מֵעִּמָ here (cf. Deut 23:22), but the personal complement with אֵת “is much more intimate and expresses closer association than the comitative sense of עִם.” The disjunctive accent 'athanāh marks the principal division of the first half of the verse and, together with the preceding conjunctive accents, marks the syntactical end of the first sentence: “Two I ask you from you.”

Again, the negation אל with the Qal jussive of the verb מען expresses a petition that regularly is not rejected: “Do not withhold” (cf. Num 22:16; Job 22:7; Prov 3:27; 23:13; 30:7). The particle preposition with the first person singular recalls the main subject and predicate of the שָאַלְתִּי clause and establishes here a personal relation with the precedingך מֵאִת: the petitions that the sender (God) can fulfill and the receiver (man) can obtain, thus, “I ask from you … do not withhold from me.”

The Mērēḵā on אל תִּמְנַע shows a conjunctive connection with the following compound and the Rēḥā muḡraš on מְִּּ֜מֶֶּ֗נִּי marks the penultimate major disjunction

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196 The LXX is less faithful here to the MT, omitting “two things” and adding a direct object, χάρις μη ἀφέλετε μου χάριν (“do not refuse me the grace”), while the Vg is more consistent with the MT: ne deneges mihi (“do not deny to me”). The Syr also closely follows the Hebrew construction (“do not withhold from me”). The Tg retains the same structure לא תיכל מני.
of the verse, which should be read as follows: “Two I ask you from you. Do not withhold (them) from me.”

The ultimate petitionary element, “before I die,” is in opposition to the things that come after life (cf. Gen 27:4; 45:28; Lev 14:36). The particle adverb בֶּּרֶּם with the preposition ב occurs three times in the Book of Proverbs, where it separates a reality before and after the main action in the clause (cf. Prov 8:25; 18:13). Here in 30:7, the verb מות (“to die”) in the imperfect of the Qal marks the appropriate interval from the articulation of the petition until the end of life (cf. Job 10:21). The entire clause should be read as follows: “Two I ask from you. Do not withhold (them) from me before I die.”

198 The LXX uses the infinitive here (probably because of the Hebrew preposition ב) as a verbal noun: πρὸ τοῦ ἀποθανεῖν με (“before my dying”). In a similar way, the Vg translates the Hebrew בטֶּרֶּם אָמוּת with antequam moriar (“before I die”). The Syr reads the Hebrew particle בְּשָׁנֵיהֶם here: שָׁנֵיהֶם (“until I die”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58; Hensler, 291; the same McKane, Proverbs, 649; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 603) translates the expression as “so lange ich lebe” (“as long as I live”), while Kamphausen (Sprüche, 387) “so lange bis ich sterbe” (“until I die”), while Ewald (p. 250, as well as Frankenberg, Sprüche, 161; Delitzsch, Commentary, 280; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Schneider, Sprüche, 160; so also Toy, Commentary, 524; Oesterley, Proverbs, 272; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220; Scott, Proverbs, 175; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 309; Murphy, Proverbs, 225; Clifford, Proverbs, 259; Steinmann, Proverbs, 589) renders “ehe ich sterbe” (“before I die”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 187) instead reads “ehe ich die Welt verlasse” (“before I leave the world”). Sauer (Sprüche, 101) thinks that this part is an “überhängender Verseteil” (“overhanging part of the verse”).
The noun שָוָא is not only a general and common word for “lie” or “vanity” in the OT (cf. Job 7:3; 35:13; Pss 41:7; 89:48), but also a strong and theological term, which is connected with God’s commandments in two ways: to avoid the vain mention of God’s name (cf. Exod 20:7; Deut 5:11) and to avoid falsehood (cf. Exod 23:1; Deut 5:20; Job 15:31). Furthermore, the noun also implies a curse (cf. Pss 12:3; 41:7; Isa 59:4) or deliverance from a curse (Job 31:5; Pss 24:4, 5; 26:4; 35:17; 60:13; 89:23; 108:13; 144:8, 11). The strong sense of the falsehood and curse present in the noun שָוָא was used by prophets as a term for idolatry (Jer 18:15; Ezek 12:24; 13:6, 7; 28:28; Hos 10:4; 12:12; Jon 2:9; Zec 10:2; Mal 3:14). In the Book of Proverbs, the word שָוָא occurs only here and, while in the MT it always refers to a

199 The LXX reads the two Hebrew nouns as μάταιον λόγον και ψευδή. A similar Greek translation of the Hebrew construction is found in Jon 2:9: "אַּשָּׁוְא וּדְבַר־כָזַב", where the adjectives μάταιον and ψευδή are closely linked, expressing the same idea of idolatry (Isa 1:13; 29:8; 45:19; 49:4; Wis 15:8). The Vg translation is more general: *vanitatem et verba mendacia* (“vanity and false words”), which surely does not exclude the idea of idolatry. The Syr reads the Hebrew construction with a theological meaning "כָּל־וֹאֵר לְשׁוֹן זָרִירָה" ("nothingness and disloyal vocabulary"). The Tg has a derivative of the word דגלא "(liar") here and seems to have understood the word as a synonym of the following שָוָא שָוָא וּדְבַר־כָזַב ("lie and word of falsehood"). The dominant scholarly interpretation is close to Shevet MiYehudah’s interpretation of the two synonyms as “faulty ideologies and genuinely good things of a temporary nature” (Ginsburg and Weinberger, *Mishlei*, 623) and translates “Betrug und Lügen” (“deceit and lying,” cf. Hensler, 291; Ziegler, *Uebersetzung*, 356; Kamphausen, *Sprüche*, 387; Sauer, *Sprüche*, 101; Schneider, *Sprüche*, 160; Toy, *Commentary*, 524; Oesterley, *Proverbs*, 272), while Frankenberg (*Sprüche*, 161; Gemser, *Sprüche*, 80; Scott, *Proverbs*, 175; Barucq, *Le livre des Proverbes*, 220; McKane, *Proverbs*, 649; Cox, *Proverbs*, 239; Moore, 101; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, *I proverbi*, 603; Lelièvre and Maillot, *Commentaire 19–31*, 317; Murphy, *Proverbs*, 225; Clifford, *Proverbs*, 259) renders “Falschheit und Lügenwort” (“falsehood and lying word”), Ewald (p. 250) and Delitzsch (*Commentary*, 287) “Etplos und Lügenwort” (“vanity and lying word”), while Fox (*Proverbs 10–31*, 860) synonymously translates the words as “falsehood and deceit” and Steinnann (p. 589) “worthless speech and lies.” Doederlein (*Sprüche*, 187, followed by De Wette, 393 and Whybray, 411) instead holds that the word שָוָא represents the name for an idol that is close to the following construction שָוָא שָוָא וּדְבַר־כזָּב ("falsehood and lying word"), and translates “Abgüter und Heidentum” (“idols and paganism”). Müntinghe (*Die Sprüche*, 101) offers here three related but different possibilities “bewahre mich, dass ich selbst weder betrüge, noch lüge... oder bewahre mich dass ich durch Anderen Betrug und Lügen nicht ins Unglück komme... oder Bewahre mich dass ich nie von der wahren Religion zu einer falschen abfälle: Abgüterei oder jede Religion die von Dienste des Jehova verschieden ist [Ez 12:24; 13:6]” (“preserve me, that I do not delude myself or lie... or preserve me that I do not become unhappy because of the deluding and lying of others... or keep me that I never fall away from the true religion to a false one, i.e., idolatry or any religion that is different from the service of the Lord [Ezek 12:24, 13:6]”). Alternatively, Toy (*Commentary*, 522) and Oesterley (*Proverbs*, 270) follow the prevalent interpretation, “deceit and lying.”
plea for salvation from those who do שָוְא, it would be inadequate to translate the word simply as “vanity” (כָּזָּב) or “lie” (שֶּקֶר). Since so far in Proverbs 30 no other word hints at apostasy except לָאִּיתִּיאֵל, the word שָוְא might allude to this term from v. 1 (Doderlein, [Sprüche, 187] translates it as “idol”). The “heresy” includes both the “vanity” and “lie” against the sacred truths of Faith. In addition, the construction דְּבַר־כָזָּב is only found here, where כז modifies דְּבַר: “a deceitful word” does not say much. Constructions such as דְּבַר־בָּרִים (“word of the king”) in 1 Chr 21:4 (cf. Job 41:4) (“word of the king”), and especially דְּבַר־לַוָּה (“word of God”) in 2 Sam 24:11; 1 Kgs 17:24; 18:1; 2 Kgs 20:4; Isa 2:3 and Mic 4:2 express the revealed, authentic and true word. In this regard, the theological expression דְּבַר־כָזָּב might represent the antithesis of God’s true revealing word and its (mis)interpretation (cf. v. 5). Besides this construction, the Book of Proverbs also uses דְּבַר־שָפָתַיִם (“blather,” Prov 14:23) and דְּבַר־עֶּצֶּב (“insult,” Prov 15:1) in a negative context. Thus, the construction דְּבַר־כָזָּב might recall דִּבְרֵי from v. 1 and have the explicatory meaning of “false talking” or “deceit” in general as an additional term for “heresy.” The Mēhuppākh lēgarmēḥ on שָוְא also appears on the very first vocable of Prov 30:1 (דִּבְרֵי). The lexemes שָוְא and דְּבַר־כָזָּב are a pair and the particle wāw on וּדְבַר־כָזָּב represents an additional statement that would be translated as “heresy and deceit (in general).”

200 Not only does Bible de Jérusalem (1956) translate the noun שָוְא as “idol” (cf. Ps 119:37), but also Dahood (Psalms I, 151) understood the term theologically as “idol.”
The Hiph’il infinitive of הָרָךְ is a verb of distance (cf. Prov 4:24; 5:8; 19:7; 22:15) and together with the particle preposition מִּן signifies the avoidance of every kind of contact. The repetition of the preposition with the nominal suffix מִּמֶּ֗נִּי suggests the role of nearness and distance and here is in a close relationship with the preceding מִּמֶּ֗נִּי in v. 7. The statement expressed by מִּמֶּ֗נִּי in the previous sentence of v. 7 reflects closeness to God, while the statements using מִּמֶּ֗נִּי in v. 8 express distance from heresy. Thus, the request for two things by the petitioner is valid because of his distance from the statement of “heresy and deceit (in general),” which can recall the ungodliness in v. 1, the exposition of the matter in vv. 2–5 and the reproach in v. 6. In addition, closeness to God and distance from sin are in juxtaposition (see my discussion of the structure in Chapter Three). The rare conjunctive accent ‘illûy on הַרְחִֵ֬ק and the disjunctive accent רֶבְיָה ‘גָּדוֹל on מִּמֶּ֗נִּי mark the conclusion of the petition: “Two I ask you from you. Do not withhold from me before I die: Keep far from me heresy and deceit (in general).”

201 The LXX translates the verb הָרָךְ with the auxiliary verb ποιεῖν in the imper. aor. and the adverb μακράν: μακράν μου ποιεῖσθαι (“make [it] far from me”). The Vg does the same: longe fac a me (“make far from me”), as well as the Syriac: אַרְחָיק (“put at a long distance from me”). The Tg follows the Syr אַרְחָיק (“put at a long distance from me”). Modern scholars also view the verb as one of distance, while translating it as “von mir entferne!” (“far away from me” or “keep me far from” or “remove far from me!”) Cf. Doederlein, Sprüche, 186; Ziegler, Übersetzung, 356; Ewald, 250; Scott, Proverbs, 175; Plaut, Proverbs, 302; Murphy, Proverbs, 225; Steinmann, Proverbs, 589).
Besides the preceding two theological nouns, a pair of secular nouns signifying social extremites, “misery as well as abundance,” appear here. The noun רֵישׁ, רִּישׁ (coming from the verb רש — “be in want,” “poor”) occurs only in the Book of Proverbs and denotes the destructive agents of poverty and, thus, is a stronger verb than the secular adjective עָנִי (cf. Prov 6:11; 10:15; 13:18; 24:34; 28:19; 31:7) and could be translated as “tribulation” or “misery,” leading to God’s indignation. The alternative wāw is used here, which, with the noun ע שֶּּר, points to “wealth or riches in abundance” (cf. 1 Kgs 3:11) that leads to כָּבֹד (“glory,” 1 Chr 29:28; 2 Chr 18:7) but also הלל (“boasting,” Ps 49:7). Both nouns denote the same idea of ungodliness as the result of the curse of misery (cf. Job 11:16; Lam 3:19), as well as abundance (cf. Ps 52:9; Prov 11:28; 22:24).

The third and last negation governing the particle אל with the jussive of the verb נתן is: 8b אַל־תִִּֽתֶּן־לִֵּ֑י.

The LXX again has a negation here μή μοι δῶς (“do not give to me”) with the subjunctive aorist of fear and warning (cf. Smyth, Greek Grammar, §1802), while the Vg translates the verb with the imperative: ne dederis mihi (“give me not!”). The Syr final negation, לא לא (“do not give to me”) reinforces the previous conjunctions “and … and.” The Tg follows the Syr and reads לא לִתֶּן (“do not give to me”). The same expression is also found in the modern translations “give me not” or “give me neither…” (cf. Murphy, Proverbs, 225; Clifford, Proverbs, 259).
in the Qal presents God’s authority and power over human life: “let me not give” or “do not charge me” as the result of God’s reprimand of the human lifestyle (cf. Gen 15:2; 28:22; Deut 15:7; Ps 85:8). The homoioptoton between הרחק and אל תתן לי underscores not only their parallel position, but also their identical meaning, where the main subject (God) has the power to liberate (רחק) or to burden (נתן) human life, not only in the area of faith-infidelity, but also in the social area of misery-abundance. In this sense, the nouns “heresy,” “deceit” and “the curse of misery as well as abundance” are all encapsulated within the frame of the two pairs. The nouns “misery” and “abundance” are not so much oxymoron as synonyms for the same class of the people who find themselves under God’s disfavor or curse (cf. the usage of נתן in Leviticus 18). The copulative Methēg is followed by the strong disjunctive accent אתנָה, which marks the end of the second phrase of the verse. The entire phrase would read as follows: “Do not curse me with misery and abundance.”

This single occurrence of the Hiph‘îl as the causative of Qal, with the weakened

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The LXX translation here is vague: σύνταξον δέ μοι τὰ δεόντα καὶ τὰ αὐτάρκη (“prescribe for me what is necessary and what is sufficient” (cf. D’Hamonville, Les Proverbes, 298). In a similar manner, the Vg’s rendering victui necessaria reflects the Hebrew “basic nutritional supplement” (cf. Gen 30:8). The Syr is more precise regarding the understanding of the Hebrew משא עלות לחיים (“give me the life food supplement”). The Tg has here the lectio difficilior and reads (מזוין (דוול) למקים מחשים (פסחא) (“nourish me by the measured bread”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58; similarly Doederlein, Sprüche, 187; Whybrey, 412; Moore, 101; Clifford, Proverbs, 259) reads here “schenk den nöthigen Unterhalt mir” (“grant sufficient maintenance to me”), and Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 357; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 603; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308; Murphy, Proverbs, 226) “nur zugemeßen Theil des Unterhalts” (“only an adequate part of the maintenance”) as well as Frankenberg (Sprüche, 161; also Cox, Proverbs, 239) “speise mich mit dem bestimmten Anteil” (“feed me with the measured portion”). Kamphausen (Sprüche, 386) and Schneider (Sprüche, 160) read here “ungemessenes Brot” (“adequate bread”), and Ewald (p. 250) has “genügend Brot” (“enough bread”), as does Hensler (p. 291; so also Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220) simply has “lass des Brots” (“let the bread”) and Delitzsch (Commentary, 280; Plaut, Proverbs, 302, Steinmann, Proverbs, 589) “the bread, which is allowed to me.”
meaning “cause to enjoy”206 or “let me devour my appointed bread”207 shows the difference in the interpretation of the verb תרפ. Without any doubt, the verb has a close link to the nourishment of wild predators, lions in particular (cf. Gen 37:33; 44:28; Exod 22:12; Deut 33:20; Job 38:39; Pss 7:3; 17:12; 22:14; 76:5; 104:21; Isa 5:29; 31:4; Jer 5:6; Ezek 19:3; 6; 22:25; Hos 5:14; Am 3:4; Mic 5:7; Nah 2:13, 14), wolves (cf. Gen 49:27; Ezek 22:27), eagles (cf. Ezek 17:9), and even wild donkeys (cf. Job 24:5). Such predators (lions, wolves and eagles) hunt when hungry, catch and eat fresh and raw food (cf. Job 29:17; Ps 50:22; 124:6; Amos 1:11; Hos 6:1; Nah 3:1). The verb eliminates every sort of delicacy referring the nourishment that a living being requires on a daily basis. In Prov 30:8, the phrase תרפ לֶּחֶּם comprises the verb תרפ in the intensive Hiph‘îl208 with לֶּחֶּם denoting the general supply of human needs that can be translated “bless me with providence” (cf. Ps 111:5; Prov 31:15; Mal 3:10).209 The noun חֻקִּי (“decree,” “limit,” “prescription”)210 is in a construction with the direct object לֶּחֶּם and, as the genitive of the specification of the epexegetical genitive, is in the service of an attribute in

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207 BDB, 383.
208 GKC, § 53d.
209 Cf. Dahood, Psalms III, 123.
210 Tur-Sinai (Job, 111) translates the noun חֻקִּי in Job 38:10 with an inner part of the body—“womb” from the noun חֵיק (“bosom” or “lap”) that can refer either to an external (cf. Exod 4:6; 2 Sam 12:13; Mic 7:5) or internal part of the body (Job 19:27; 23:12). The form חֻקִּי could be emended חֵקי (“my midst,” “insides,” cf. 1 Kgs 22:35; Job 13:27; Pss 35:13; 89:51; Jer 32:18; Qoh 7:9; or “bottom,” “base,” cf. Ezek 43:13, 14, 17) and translated as “my midst,” “my base,” “my being,” “my life.” In this case, the direct object לֶּחֶּם is constructed with חֵקי: “the bread of my life,” but the following verse (v. 9) explicitly restricts the quantity of the food and so the emendation is unnecessary here. Cf. Clines, Job 38–42, 1055.
adjectival construction.\textsuperscript{211} The suff. of the 1 ms הַחֻקִּי denotes a close connection with הַטְרִּיפֵנִּי and might mean, not “of my limited allotment,” but rather what is “right for me” (cf. Gen 47:22; Prov 31:15; Ezek 16:27).\textsuperscript{212} Since the direct object לֶּחֶּם, is in the combination with הַחֻקִּי, it cannot be understood literally as “portion of bread” but rather as “my daily food” (cf. Müntinghe, \textit{Die Sprüche}, 58). However, the phrase הַטְרִּיפֵנִּי לֶּחֶּם הַחֻקִּי is the antithesis of the terms heresy and deceit,” “the curse of misery and abundance” in v. 8 and serves here as an explicatory contingent, where it is obvious that the saying includes not only food but, as a colloquialism, might refer generally to “God’s blessing and providence” or “existential stability,” where again the verb הַטְרִּיפֵנִּי demonstrates God’s agency in human life.\textsuperscript{213} The translation of the second part of v. 8 is as follows: “Do not curse me with misery or abundance. (On the contrary) bless me with suitable providence concerning myself.”\textsuperscript{214}

\textsuperscript{211} Waltke and O’Connor (1990) 151.
\textsuperscript{212} Cf. BDB, 349.
\textsuperscript{213} Sauer (\textit{Sprüche}, 101–102) in “existential stability,” alongside the preceding two petitions against Trug/Lüge and Ammut/Reichtum recognizes here third petition for tätiglich Brot and inserts in v. 7 the numeralia שלושה alongside שני and reads v. 7: “Zwei (two) Dinge habe ich erbeten von dir, drei (three) wollest du laß fern von mir sein.”
\textsuperscript{214} Cf. Clines, \textit{Job} 21–37, 580.
The particle conjunction פֶּן expresses here not only a conditional possibility (cf. אֶּשְׂבַַ֙ע׀), but also opens the circumstantial clause attached to the main subject of “suitable providence,” in opposition to “heresy and deceit” and the “curse of misery and abundance.”Thus, the verb שָׂבַע is closely related to the preceding verse and explains the preceding petition linked with the “curse of misery and abundance.”

The verb שָׂבַע (“eat enough”) is generally a human quality as a result of righteousness (cf. Prov 3:10; 12:11, 14; 13:25; 18:20; 20:13; 28:19) and refers not only to God’s blessing and providence for a man (cf. Pss 17:15; 91:16; 132:15; Jer 31:14), but also a tendency toward human perversion (cf. Exod 16:1–12). Here, the verb might be theologically emphasized, recalling the historical perversion and carefree lives of the satiated people in Exodus 16. The conjunctive accent Mērā on פֶּן marks the prolongation of the last syllable and the word’s determination with the following אֶּשְׂבַַ֙ע, while the disjunctive accent °azlâ

215 The LXX translation is close to the Hebrew, reading ἵνα μὴ πλησθεὶς (“lest I be full”). The same construction is found in the Vg: ne forte saturatus (“lest I would be satiated”). The meaning of satiety in the Vg translation might be closely related to vomiting (cf. Prov 25:16) and “Vomiter” (cf. Prov 30:1). The Syr uses here the verb זהב (“to have plenty”) and inserts a relative clause لܐܕܐܣܒܥ (“so that I do not have plenty”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58, as well as Hensler, 291; De Wette, 393; Garrett, Proverbs, 239; Whybray, 412) translates here with the conditional “sonst möcht ich, im Überflusse (“otherwise I would, in abundance”) and Doederlein (Sprüche, 186) “sonst wenn ich zu viel hätte” (“otherwise, if I would have too much”) as well as Steinmann (Proverbs, 589) “otherwise I may feel satisfied,” while Kamphausen (Sprüche, 387, as well as Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115) emphatically translates “ich möchte sonst, wo ich zu fett würde” (“otherwise, I would – being overweight”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 375; the same Toy, Commentary, 524; Oesterley, Proverbs, 272; Scott, Proverbs, 176; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 603; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308; Murphy, Proverbs, 226) reads here a causal clause: “damit ich nicht zu sehr gesättigt” (“lest, not being well nourished, I…”). A similar choice of rendering is found in Ewald (p. 250, as well as Frankenberg, Sprüche, 161; Delitzsch, Commentary, 280; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220), who offers here a cause/effect clause “damit ich nicht zu sehr geworden” (“lest, not being satiated, I…”) and Sauer (Sprüche, 101; Clifford, Proverbs, 259; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 860) “damit ich nicht satt werde” (“lest, not being satiated, I…”). By contrast, McKane (Proverbs, 649) reads here the conditional clause: “if I am too well-fed,” while Moore (p. 101) reads an alternative clause with the conj. “or”: “or I shall be full.”


217 In Proverbs 30 the verb שָׂבַע is always utilized in a negative context. Cf. Prov 30:15, 16, 25.
lēḡarmeh shows the close syntactic relationship of the conjunctive words under its domain, which also extends to the following syntactical construction (cf. הַרְפָּאָה and in v. 4). The translation would be “lest I have in excess.”

The conditional wāw continues the conditional phrase of v. 9. The verb כחש follows the noun יה ("God," cf. Josh 24:27; Job 31:28; Ps 59:11–13) and occurs only here in Proverbs. Probably borrowed from the prophetic language (cf. Isa 30:9; 59:13 and Jer 5:12), the verb generally reflects a real negation of existence and is always negative in the MT and simply means “to deny” what is real, actual and true and, thus, “to lie” (Gen 18:5; Josh 24:27; Job 31:28; Ps 59:13; Isa 30:9). Since the verb כחש is here without an object but, to some extent, relies on the object of the following verb אמ, it means to “deny the truth” or “deny what exists” and thus “to behave hypocritically,” intentionally deceiving others (1 Kgs 13:8; Job 31:28).

The direct object of the following verb אמ is הוה which also indirectly explains the

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218 The LXX differs from the MT, translating the Hebrew verb כחש as ψευδὴς γένωμαι “(lest I)... and become a liar.” The Greek interpretation hints at the previous v. 8 and especially v. 6 (cf. D’Hamonville, 299). The Vg utilizes the gerundive here to express the Hebrew and translates inliciar ad negandum—"turn away negating.” The Syr follows the LXX interpretation here and translates the Hebrew verb withܟܕܒ—"to lie" in the imperfect. The Targum follows the Hebrew verb with אכפר—"to lie" in the imperfect—"then I shall lie." The Targum follows the Hebrew verb not in pf. but rather in impf. רָאשָׁה—"and I shall deny." Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58 as well as Kamphhausen, Sprüche, 387; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 161, Delitzsch, Commentary, 280; Ewald, 250; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Schneider, Sprüche, 160) translates the Hebrew verb with “(ver)läugnen”—"deny.” Doederlein (Sprüche, 187, as well as De Wette, 393) is much more determinative and reads here “Gottesäugnen werden”—“become an atheist.” Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 357; the same McKane, Proverbs, 649) inserts an object here, “Gott verläugne”—“deny God” and Hensler (p. 291; the same Toy, Commentary, 524; Oesterley, Proverbs, 272; Scott, Proverbs, 176; Cox, Proverbs, 239; Moore, 101; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 603; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308; Steinmann, Proverbs, 589) the pron. suff. 2 ms "dir entsagen”—“renounce you” (Garrett, Proverbs, 238 reads “disown you”). Sauer (Sprüche, 101; the same Plaut, Proverbs, 302) does not add the object or pronominal suffix and reads: “und so leugne”—“and so deny” and Barucq (Le livre des Proverbes, 220) "trahisse”—“betray,” while Whybray (p. 412) “profane” and Murphy (Proverbs, 226) “become a renegade.” Longman (Proverbs, 524) instead reads “act deceptively” and Clifford (Proverbs, 259) translates here “and play false.”

219 Cf. Clines, Job, 21–37, 969.
The verb כחש: “to behave hypocritically toward God.” Thus, the verb כחש linked with God, not with Elohim, approximates its prophetic usage to express real alienation from God and abandonment of his religion in a hypocritical manner. The postpositive accent Zarqâ marks the conditional sentence. The translation, therefore, is “I behave hypocritically.”

The final effect expressed by wāw clarifies the preceding verb and the conclusive theme of denial. The phrase הַיְּהוָ֣ה מִּ֥י is emphatic and expresses the acceptance of an idea or reality, which usually includes the noun לְבָבִּי (“in my heart” or “in reality,” cf. Deut 3:2, 17; 9:4; 15:9; Job 1:5; Pss 10:4–6; 14:1; 36:2; 53:2). Since the ungodly statement has already been articulated in v. 1, here with the phrase הַיְּהוָ֣ה מִּ֥י (“And I said: Who is God?”), it is pronounced again, expressing the abandonment of God’s commandments and authentic religion, thus, “and indeed accept the ‘ungodliness.’” The warning in v. 9 (cf. Jeremiah 5) obviously recalls the ungodliness committed in v. 1 (cf. also Jeremiah 2). The disjunctive רְבָּה יָגַּדְּלָ on מִּ֥י הַיְּהוָ֣ה is a pre-tone to the conclusive ‘אָלֶּה וְיֹרֶ֖ד on מִ֥י הַיְּהוָ֣ה (cf. מַעְלַּ֑ה in v. 1), which is closely related to the pronoun מִ֥י with its strong

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220 Instead of מִ֥י הַיְּהוָ֣ה, the LXX reads מִ֥י יִֶֽחֱזֶּֽה and translates τίς με ὁρᾶ (“who can see me?”). The MT as well as the LXX synchronizes Proverbs 30 according to its position in the Book of Proverbs. Thus, the LXX, incorporating Prov 30:1–14 before the Hezekian collection (Proverbs 25–31) while attributing it to Solomon’s collection, eliminates any possibility of blasphemy or anathema that could be ascribed to the King Solomon. By contrast, the MT begins with the ungodly statement in the very first verse of Proverbs 30, but ascribing it not to Solomon’s collection (Proverbs 1–24) but rather to a king of Judah after the King Hezekiah (Proverbs 25–31, see “Agur’s Section” and the “MT/LXX Alternatives” in Chapter One as well as “Conclusion” of this dissertation). The Vg follows the MT and reads quis est Dominus (“who is the Lord?”). The Syr does so as well, reading the masculine enclitic אֶֽהָלְאָֽו (“who is the Lord?”). The Tg reads מַהְּיָֽה אֶלֹהַ (“who is God?”). Kamphausen (Sprüche, 387) translates the interrogative clause as “Wer ist der Ewige?” (“who is the Eternal?”), while Murphy (Proverbs, 226) renders “The Lord—who?”
conjunctive Mērēḵā accent. The translation of the entire verse is “Lest I have in excess, I behave hypocritically and proclaim: “Who is the Lord?”

The circumstantial wāw is closely linked to the main subject לִשֵּׁן of v. 8b and, offering details about the “curse of misery and abundance,” cites another extreme possibility (נִפְרָד) with the verb שַׁרֵי. The verb occurs two hundred thirty-two times in the MT, mainly in the Qal (cf.Gen 15:8; 22:17; Lev 20:24; Num 13:30; 21:35; Pss 25:13; 37:9; 44:3,4) and Hiph’il (cf. Exod 15:9; 34:24; Num 14:12; 32:21; Job 13:26; 20:15; Prov 30:23), rarely in the Pi`el (only Deut 28:42) and Niph`al (cf. Gen 45:11; Prov 6:30; 9:17; 29:24 and 30:9). In Prov 6:30; 9:17; 29:24, all three occurrences are in the context of usurpation caused by poverty, while in Prov 30:9 the effect of such usurpation is the violation and dishonoring of the name of God.

The Niph`al imperfect of the strong verb שַׁרֵי refers to an action that affects the subject: “Likewise, lest I take what does not belong to me.” The Hebrew verb גֹנֵב literally means “to take away,” “deprive.” The verb can be used ambiguously so that, on one hand, in Gen 31:39 the Qal part. גְנִֻֽבְּתִּי denotes “profanation,”

221 The LXX see in the above Hebrew lexemes a cause-effect situation, translating πανηθείς κλέψω (“[or] becoming poor, I steal”). The Vg translates egestate compulsus furer (“by want I am compelled to steal”). The Syr uses the verb מַסְכַּנ in Ethp’el impf. and the verb Гзна in P’al impf.: (cf. Heb. גְנִּב) (“and that I not, being in want, steal”). The Tg uses the same verbs as the Syr does and reads ולְאָתַם מַסְכַּנ אָזְם גָּנַב with the same meaning as the Syr. Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58; as well as Hensler, 291; Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 357; Delitzsch, Commentary, 280; Sauer, Sprüche, 101; Toy, Commentary, 524; Oesterley. Proverbs, 272; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220; Moore, 101; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308; Murphy, Proverbs, 226; Steinmann, Proverbs, 589) juxtaposes here “Armut” (“poverty”) and “stehlen” (“stealing”). Ewald (p. 250; as well as Kamphausen. Sprüche, 386) uses the intensive expression “zu arm geworden” (“become too poor”). Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 603) translate “che io rubi per bisogna” (“that I steal because of need”). Longman (Proverbs, 524) similarly reads: “lest I don’t have much and steal,” and Clifford (Proverbs, 259): “lest I turn poor and become a thief.”

222 Cf. the further translation of the construct “The Name of God” in v. 9bβ.
“dishonor” or “desacralization,” while on the other hand, in Jer 23:30 the Pi‘ēl part. relates to plagiarism, even false prophecy. The conjunctive accent Mêrēḵa on proceeds the last syllable and the determination of the verb with the following word [which is under the strong disjunctive accent Afnāḥ] that marks the principal division of the first half of the verse: “Likewise, lest I take what does not belong to me and commit desacralization.”

The conclusive wāw follows the preceding negative effect of the conditional actions. The verb [“take,” “seize,” “grasp”], generally denotes violation and regularly expresses the final-effect action of conquering a city (Deut 21:19; Josh 8:8; 2 Kgs 7:12; 14:7; 16:9; 18:13), capturing a king (Josh 8:23; 1 Sam 15:8) and

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225 The Greek verb ὀμόσω (“I swear”) also characterizes an oath or religion, and with the conjunction καί creates an antithesis between “keep stealing” as a sinner and “keep swearing in God” as a religious person. The Vg in a less emphatic context translates the Hebrew verb paierem (“perjure myself”). The Syr with the expression ܐܡܐ refers to “disregard” of God’s name, while the Targum using the verb הָֽעֵבֵּ֑ר אֱלֹהִּים (Hāḇ‘ēr Ēlōhīm) denotes the “desecration” of God’s name. Basing his translation on the Tg, Grätz (“Exegetische,” 437) emends the MT and reads הָֽעֵבֵּ֑ר אָמֵֽר אֱלֹהִּים (Hāḇ‘ēr Ēlōhīm) (“that I steal and infringe [‘antasten’] and thus pollute the name”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58, cf. Ewald, 250; De Wette, 393; Kamphausen, Sprüche, 387; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 161; Sauer, Sprüche, 101; Schneider, Sprüche, 160; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 494) translates the Hebrew verb as “vergreifen” (“assault”). Gemser (Sprüche, 80) besides “vergreifen” offers such alternatives as “der Verfluchung des Diebes; oder Gott verflucht oder dass für his own sake the name of God is blasphemed” (“the curse of the thief or curse God; or that for his own sake the name of God is blasphemed”). Toy (Commentary, 524; likewise Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 220; Scott, Proverbs, 176; Plaut, Proverbs, 302; Cox, Proverbs, 239; Whybray, 412; Moore, 101; Clifford, Proverbs, 259; Steinmann, Proverbs, 589) reads here “to profane,” Oesterley (Proverbs, 272) “use (handle) profanely.” Delitzsch (Commentary, 280) also sees here the synonym of profanation of the holy and Hensler (p. 291), in line with the Syr, translates “entehren” (“to dishonor”) Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 357) reads here “fälschlich schwöre” (“swear falsely”). Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverb, 603) translate the term in an abusive sense “abusando del name” (“abusing the name”), while Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 860) reads here “violation of oath,” and Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 308), similarly to Driver (who derives the Hebrew term from the Arabic tafṣīḥ—“stain,” “besmirch” [see Toy, Commentary, 650] translate “et ne porte atteinte au nom” (“and does not affect the name”). Murphy (Proverbs, 226) reads here “blaspheme the name.”
innocents (Pss 10:2; 71:11; Jer 26:8), the executing of the captured (1 Sam 23:26; 1 Kgs 18:40; 20:18; Ezek 17:20) or a prohibited sexual activity (Gen 39:12; Num 5:13; Deut 22:28). In addition, the object is one who undergoes an action involving force. Thus, the action of the verb שָתַּ֥ס is deliberate, aggressive, and definitive.²²⁶ Consequently, the Qal pf. רּ֥בָ֑ח should be understood in the light of its general object as a deliberate, emphatic and definitive breakdown of the relationship with God.²²⁷ ṫֻּ֣֝כִּי is a pre-tone disjunctive accent to the following conclusive דָּלִ֥֜ךְ וְיָֽשֶׁרְדָּא. The translation of the final verb would be “and thus desecrate…”²²⁸

²²⁶ Gersonides also sees here an action that leads to total apostasy. Cf. Kravitz and Olitzky, Mishlei, 296.

²²⁷ Cf. BDB, 1074. Herder (p. 129) instead descriptively reads: “Vergreifend mich am Namen meines Gottes, durch falschen Schwur” (“assulting the name of my God, through a false oath”).

²²⁸ Ben Yehudah (“The Edomite Language,” 115) translates the Hebrew שָתַּ֥ס here with “blaspheme.”

²²⁹ The noun שָתַּ֥ס can serve as an equivalent for יהוה in the MT.²³⁰ In fact, the construction יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי is frequent in the OT.²³¹ The construction יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי is

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²²⁹ The noun שָתַּ֥ס can serve as an equivalent for יהוה in the MT.²³⁰ In fact, the construction יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי is frequent in the OT.²³¹ The construction יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי is
especially frequent in the Books of Jeremiah and Amos.\textsuperscript{232} The construction יהוה אֱלֹהִי denotes a declaration (cf. Exod 3:18), a profession (cf. Gen 9:26; 28:13; Ps 18:29), an oath (cf. Gen 24:3; Deut 1:11) and obedience (cf. Exod 9:1; 32:27) to יהוה who is revealed to Israel.\textsuperscript{233} Since, the noun שֵם denotes יהוה in v. 9 (the construct form with שֵם in the wider context can also represent the personality [cf. Pss 109:21; 143:11]\textsuperscript{234} or even [Zion] theology [cf. 1 Kgs 8:35; Ps 99:3]\textsuperscript{235}), while the preceding part of the sentence, to which belongs the construct form רַבְגֵּג שֵם, deals with a transgression of one of the commandments of the Law (Exod 20:15; Lev 19:11; Deut 5:19), the 1st-person pronominal suffix on רַבְגֵּג is possessive and, thus, relates to the syntagma רַבְגֵּג שֵם (“the name of my God”), which represent the author’s relationship with his religion. Here the second Petauah opens a new segment. My translation of the entire v. 9 would be as follows: “Likewise, lest I take what does not belong to me and commit desacralization and thus desecrate the name of my God” (cf. 1 Kgs 5:19; 8:20).


\textsuperscript{233} “Where the identity of a deity as the God of Israel is established by use of ha ʾelōhīm, the form ʾelōhīm may subsequently be used without fear of misunderstanding (e.g. Judg 6:36, 39-40; Exod 1:17, 20; 2:23-25; 18:19, 21, 23; 1 Sam. 14:37–38).” B. P. Irwin, Baal and Yahweh in the Old Testament: A Fresh Examination of the Biblical and Extra-Biblical Data (Doc. Thes.; Toronto: University of St. Michael’s College, 1999) 104.

\textsuperscript{234} A. S. van der Woude, “שֵם,” \textit{TLOT} 3:1351.

\textsuperscript{235} F. V. Reiterer, “שֵם,” \textit{TDOT} 15:140–41.
The very rare verb לָשׁוּן as the denominative of a part of the body (לָשׁוּן—“tongue”) in the Hiph’l jussive form with the adverb of prohibition לֹא expresses an abuse of words to compromise someone or discredit someone’s reputation. The direct object of the verb is the common noun נֶסֶב, which generally designates a “slave” or “servant.” In both cases, the term denotes a person who is submissive to the אָדוֹן (“lord”). A slave is considered property, whose reputation does not count in society (cf. Gen 12:16; 20:14; 1 Sam 8:16; 2 Kgs 5:26), while a servant has the status of a free person (cf. Laban and Jacob in Genesis 29f.) who, although subordinated to his lord while serving him, has a position that can improve or decline. The noun נֶסֶב introduces the relationship servant-lord, which opens a juridical section on the

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236 The LXX again uses an expression of warning (cf. Smyth, *Greek Grammar*, §1802) and reads μὴ παραδοῦσιν οἰκέτην (“do not hand over the house servant”). The main point of its Greek translation differs from the MT. Unlike the Hebrew, the Greek (cf. also Symmachus and Theodotion in D’Hamonville, *Les Proverbes*, 299) refers here, the final process of accusation, which is “lord’s sentence.” Sauer (*Sprüche*, 102) thinks that the LXX reads here the verb לָשׁוּן as לֹא נֶסֶב נֶסֶב (“do not finish [with]”). The Vg follows the LXX’s causative expression: ne accuses servum (“do not accuse the servant”), as does the Syr. אָלָם נֶסֶב נֶסֶב (“do not hand over the servant”). The Tg uses the same root as the Hebrew דָבַר (“to speak;” “to slander”) and translates מַרְבִּעַ נֶסֶב נֶסֶב (“do not slander the servant”). Based on the intensive Ugaritic lsn (“to slander”), Dahood (*Proverbs and Northwest*, 57) suggests emending the Hebrew Hiph’il לָשׁוּן to Pr’el מַרְבִּעַ and reads: “Slander not a servant to his master.” Müntinghe (*Die Sprüche*, 58; similarly Lelièvre and Maillot, *Commentaire 19–31, 308; Fox, *Proverbs 10–31*, 862), following the Hebrew vocalization reads “Sprich von einem Sklaven nichts Böses” (“speak no evil of a slave”), Ziegler (*Uberersetzung*, 357) “Verleumde nicht den Sklaven” (“slander not the slave”). Doedderlein’s translation (*Sprüche*, 188) seems more faithful to the Hebrew: “Verleumde keinen Bedienten” (“slander no servant”), while Frankenbergs translation (*Sprüche*, 161; as well as Gemser, *Sprüche*, 80; Sauer, *Sprüche*, 102; Meinhold, *Sprüche*, 494; Oesterley, *Proverbs*, 273: Barucq, *Le livre des Proverbes*, 222; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, *I proverbi*, 604; Longman, *Proverbs*, 526; Clifford, *Proverbs*, 259; Steinmann, *Proverbs*, 589) is with an indefinite article: “Verleumde nicht einen Knecht” (“do not slander a servant”). Ewald (p. 250) reads here “Reiz nicht den Diener” (“do not provoke the servant”), Toy (*Commentary*, 525) “defame not a servant,” while Scott (*Proverbs*, 178) and Murphy (*Proverbs*, 226) read “do not inform on (speak about) a servant.” Grätz (“Exegetische,” 437) does not translate v. 10, holding that this verse was adopted from Prov 25:9–10.

237 Cf. DBB, 546; Gesenius, 3:617.


239 Ringgren, “Nebi.” *TDOT* 10:390 identifies the servant of Prov 30:10 as a “slave’s existence (better to read slave’s existence)” that can be improved in the sense of his treatment, which at some point can be characterized as not so much as one of the servants but as one of the family members (cf. Prov 17:2).
relationships of children-parents and sinners-righteous in vv. 11–14. The translation of this part of the sentence is as follows: “Do not speak ill of a servant...”

The directive לָשׁוֹן has its object in the following noun. The shorter form of the Kethib לָשׁוֹן, with the suff. of the 3 ms לְדֹנֶn; 241 The directive אֶל has its object in the following noun. The shorter form of the Kethib לָשׁוֹן, with the suff. of the 3 ms לְדֹנֶנֶנֶנֶנֶנֶנֶנֶn that occurs only here in the MT, assimilates the suff. 1 ms לְדֹנֶn (“my lord,” cf, 1 Sam 16:16), depicting the relationship between a lord and his servant more as a partnership than servitude or slavery. The Qere, by contrast, with the emphatic plural construct with the suff. 3 ms לְדֹנֶנֶn, is a frequent construct form in the MT and distinguishes the Lord לָשׁוֹן (more than four hundred times in the MT) from the master/lord who has servants. The disjunctive accent מָתָח marks the principal division of the first half of the verse, which I translate as follows: “Do not speak ill of a servant to his lord.”


241 The LXX introduces additional words, where the object is not specified by a personal pronoun: εἰς χεῖρας δεσπότου (“into the hands of the lord”). The Syr understands the preposition לָשׁוֹן not as estimative but rather determinative and the noun מֶרֶד (“the lord”) reads as an emphatic plural in the Qere to distinguish the term “lord” from the divine title “Lord:” מֶרֶד. (“to his lord,” cf. Coakley, Syriac, 26–27). The Tg reads the noun as a singular compound as מֶרֶד (“to his lord”). German scholars regularly follow the Kethib form and translate “bei seinem Herrn” (“in the presence of his lord,” cf. Müntinghe, Die Sprüche, 58; Doederlein, Sprüche, 187; Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 357; Ewald, 250; De Wette, 393; Kamphausen, Sprüche, 387; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 160, Delitzsch, Commentary, 283; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Sauer, Sprüche, 102; Schneider, Sprüche, 160; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 494 and Sæbø, Sprüche, 367), as do English “to his master” (Toy, Commentary, 252; Oesterley, Proverbs, 237; Scott, Proverbs, 178; Garrett, Proverbs, 238; Whybray, 412; Longman, Proverbs, 526; Murphy, Proverbs, 226; Clifford, Proverbs, 259; Steinmann, Proverbs, 589) and French and Spanish (Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 222; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 604).

The fourth causative particle conjunction, פֶּן, with the Pi‘ēl impf. of קָלָל generates a conditional clause of the dependent sentence. The verb קָלָל is strong and determinative, with the meaning “to curse or to pronounce an oath against another, imploring the forces of nature to bring on that person the harm defined in the curse.” The verb in Pi‘ēl usually refers to punishment for a transgression (Lev 20:9; 24:15; 2 Sam 16:9. 10; Prov 30:11; Isa 65:20). The suff. 2 ms serves as the direct object of the verb קָלָל and the semi-conclusion of the sentence. The copulative Methēg is followed by the Mērēkā, which shows a conjunctive connection with the following compound. The dependent clause would be translated as “lest he curse you.”

243 The LXX again utilizes the expression of warning with the negation and subjunctive: μήποτε καταράσῃ σε (“lest he curse you”). The Vg uses the auxiliary word forte to express the Hebrew נֶא פַּה מֶלֶדֵיכָתָהּ (“lest he curse you”). The Syr also utilizes here the verb דֶּלֶת (“to curse”) in Pa‘ēl 3 ms with the pron. suff. 2 ms and reads אֶל מֶלֶדְיָה (“that does not curse you”). The Tg uses an irregular form of Pa‘ēl 3 ms of the verb צָעֵר (“to torture”) and reads נא צָעֵר לַלֶא (“lest he torture you”). Jäger (Observationes, 217) identifies what would cause an unbearable relationship between the lord and the servant, i.e., the betrayal or the reduction the power of the lord. Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58, as well as Doederlein, Sprüche, 188, Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 161; Ewald, 250) reads here “dass er dir nicht fluche”—“lest he curse you”). Frankenberg (Sprüche, 161, as well as Delitzsch, Commentary, 283; Sauer, Sprüche, 102; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 494; Sæbø, Sprüche, 367; Toy, Commentary, 525; Oesterley, Proverbs, 273; Scott, Proverbs, 179; Barucq Le livre des Proverbes, 222; Longman, Proverbs, 526; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 864; Murphy, Proverbs, 226; Clifford, Proverbs, 259) utilizes here a consequential conjunction “damit er dir nicht fluche” (“lest he curse you”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 357, as well as Schneider, Sprüche, 160; the same Steinmann, Proverbs, 589) implies an evidential particle “sonst verflucht er dich” (“otherwise he will curse you”). Garrett (Proverbs, 238) proposes an alternative reading: “or he will curse you” and Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 604), reading the phrase as a part of previous prohibition, have “ti maledirà” (“he will curse you”). Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 308) have here less intensive verb “discrédie.”

244 Hartley, The Book of Job, 339.
After the causative expression, the consecutive wāw shows the effect of the preceding condition (cf. Judg 21:22). Here, the verb אשם is a perfectum confidentiae or perfectum propheticum, which serves as the link between the aforementioned condition and the following additional explanation in vv. 11–14. A similar cultic use of the verb אשם is found in Lev 4:13 (see also 4:22, 27; 5:2–4), where the legal application of guilt is stressed in the following verse Lev 4:14 (2:23, 28, 5:2–5), i.e., “the sinners are culpable for their act...” Here, as in Lev 5:17, the term “includes both the formal, legal obligation and personal sense of apprehension and unsettledness resulting from a misdeed.” The alternative reading אשם (“to perish”), used by Dahood, seems very emphatic. Likewise, the explanation by

245 The LXX reads here the Hebrew root ששם (“make deserted,” “devastate,” “destroy,” cf. Jäger, Observationes, 217) and not ששם (“find guilty”). The Vg also translates the Hebrew verb לשם as ששם and reads it in pres. 2 act. subj. et corruas (“and you would be appalled”). The Syr has here Ethpa’al of ששם (“be guilty”) and reads ששם (“and you would be found guilty”). The Tg utilizes the same verb as has the Syr, i.e., the verb בשם, which it reads in Hijpa’al התwives (“and you would be found guilty”). Similarly, Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58) and Plöger (Sprüche, 352) also read the phrase as “und dich der Fluch nicht treffen” (“lest the curse find you”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 186) instead has the less emphatic phrase “und du müßtest es entgelten” (“and you might pay for it”). Similar to Doederlein is Kamphausen’s reading (Sprüche, 386): “und du Strafe leiden müßtest (“and you would have to suffer the punishment”). Similarly Ziegler reads (Uebersetzung, 357, as well as Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 222; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 604) “und du nicht straflos bleiben” (“and you do not go unpunished”). Ewald (p. 250, as well as Sauer, Sprüche, 102; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 160; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Schneider, Sprüche, 160; Sebta, Sprüche, 367; Whybray, 238; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308) has “und du es büßen müßtest” (“you would have to atone for it”), while Meinhold (Sprüche, 495) reads “und du selbst schuld bist” (“and you yourself are to blame”). Toy (Commentary, 525, as well as Oesterley, Proverbs, 273; Plaut, Proverbs, 302; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 864; Murphy, Proverbs, 226; Steinmann, Proverbs, 589) reads here “and thou be held guilty” and Scott (Proverbs, 178) and Clifford (Proverbs, 259) have “and you incur guilt,” while Longman (Proverbs, 526) reads “and you stand under the curse.”


247 GKC, §106n.

248 The LXX reads here the Hebrew root ששם (“make deserted,” “devastate,” “destroy,” cf. Jäger, Observationes, 217) and not ששם (“find guilty”). The Vg also translates the Hebrew verb לשם as ששם and reads it in pres. 2 act. subj. et corruas (“and you would be appalled”). The Syr has here Ethpa’al of ששם (“be guilty”) and reads ששם (“and you would be found guilty”). The Tg utilizes the same verb as has the Syr, i.e., the verb בשם, which it reads in Hijpa’al התwives (“and you would be found guilty”). Similarly, Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58) and Plöger (Sprüche, 352) also read the phrase as “und dich der Fluch nicht treffen” (“lest the curse find you”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 186) instead has the less emphatic phrase “und du müßtest es entgelten” (“and you might pay for it”). Similar to Doederlein is Kamphausen’s reading (Sprüche, 386): “und du Strafe leiden müßtest (“and you would have to suffer the punishment”). Similarly Ziegler reads (Uebersetzung, 357, as well as Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 222; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 604) “und du nicht straflos bleiben” (“and you do not go unpunished”). Ewald (p. 250, as well as Sauer, Sprüche, 102; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 160; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Schneider, Sprüche, 160; Sebta, Sprüche, 367; Whybray, 238; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308) has “und du es büßen müßtest” (“you would have to atone for it”), while Meinhold (Sprüche, 495) reads “und du selbst schuld bist” (“and you yourself are to blame”). Toy (Commentary, 525, as well as Oesterley, Proverbs, 273; Plaut, Proverbs, 302; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 864; Murphy, Proverbs, 226; Steinmann, Proverbs, 589) reads here “and thou be held guilty” and Scott (Proverbs, 178) and Clifford (Proverbs, 259) have “and you incur guilt,” while Longman (Proverbs, 526) reads “and you stand under the curse.”

248 The root is most frequent in the Book of Leviticus – about forty times.

249 The community sinned and becomes aware of its guilt. “שם has both a formal, legal meaning, “become culpable and accused” for an act, and an emotional, dynamic meaning, “feel or realize guilt.” John E. Hartley, Leviticus (WBC 4; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1992) 62, 73 n. 17c.

Kellermann of the verb as “automatic punishment… and destruction even death” sounds too specific.\textsuperscript{251} The meaning of the verb in Prov 30:10 is \textit{successive} and “takes part in the moral and legal punishment according to the Law,” which is subject to different penalties expressed in the following vv. 11–14 (cf. Lev 5:17; 2 Chr 19:10).\textsuperscript{252} The translation “…and you will be found guilty” is unsatisfactory because the type of “guilt” is not specified. The list of types of “juridical accusations and punishments” in vv. 11–14 explains the sort of guilt cited in v. 10: “… so that you would be punished alike. The entire verse would be translated as follows: “Do not compromise the servant with his lord, lest he curse you so that you would be punished.”


\textsuperscript{252} Hartley, \textit{Leviticus}, 76–77.
The noun דֹ֭ר can signify "period," "generation" and "kin," but also "eternity" (cf. Ps 24:6). In the MT, the term refers to two basic types of people: the one who obeys God and his Law (Deut 7:9; 23:3; 32:7; 1 Chr 16:15; Est 9:28; Pss 24:6; 72:5; 73:15; 78:6; 105:8; 112:2; 145:4. 13; Isa 58:2; 60:15; 61:4), and the one who rejects God and his Law (cf. Deut 32:5. 20; Judg 2:10; Pss 49:20; 78:8; Isa 13:20; Jer 7:29; 50:39). Here, the subject דֹ֭ר, used as a metalepsis (cf. Ziegler, *Neue Uebersetzung*, 358), portrays people who “experience the same significant events” and are similar in social attitudes and behavior. The term “generation” often could refer to “social..."
change and the idea of youthful rebellion against the established social order.”

The rebellious “Youth” of v. 1 is representative of the rebellious generation described in vv. 11–14. Thus, the new clause would be read as “the generation.”

The Syr introduces לָדֶרֶא here to connect the preceding material with the following. We would expect here the lāme of specification or similitude (“such as” or “alike,” cf. הָלַעֲלָה in v. 15a). Thus, the translation here would be “alike the generation.”

The direct object אָבִּיו with the suff. of 3 ms and the repetition of the cultic predicate, here, too, with the Pi‘ēl impf. of לְלַעֲלָה, is a dependent clause of the effect that was caused in the preceding verse. A curse against parental authority carried the death penalty (cf. Exod 21:15, 17; Lev 20:9; Deut 21:18–21; Prov 20:20). The sentence דוֹר אָבִּיו יְקַלֵּל represents the first example of a transgression that is punishable according to a norm established in the Law (cf. Ps 18:31; 104:17; 125:2; Qoh 257–259).

257 Ibid., 481–82.
258 Kent and Burrows (Proverbs, 109) hold that “the word signifies a general class rather than the men living at a particular time.”
259 The LXX roughly follows the Hebrew syntactical construction and, eliminating the pronominal suffix, reads the sentence more formally as πατέρα καταρᾶται (“curse the father”). The Vg follows the Hebrew literally: patri suo maledicit (“curse his father”). The Syr utilizes again the emphatic plural with the “plural” suffix, attached to the masculine plural nouns and the verb in P-al impf. 3 ms to avoid any possible mixed it up with God the Father. The Syriac utilizes here the verb ﻢﺘّﺤِبّا “(to heat,” “to burn less”), a strong verb than the verb in v. 10 and reads ﻦﺳّﺤِبّا ﻋَلِيِّ ﻋِمَّٰ (that ‘heats’ [the head] of [their] his father[s]). The Tg utilizes the same verb ﻦَعَلَّتا as in v. 10 as well as the emphatic singular of קְזֲחֵא with the 3 ms “plural” pronominal suffix and reads ﻦَعَلَّتا ﻦَعَلَّتا ﻦَعَلَّتا (“that tortures his father”). Modern scholars are unanimous regarding this sentence as emphasizing a domestic curse. Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as Doederlein, Sprüche, 189; Delitzsch, Commentary, 284; Toy, Commentary, 256; Oesterley, Proverbs, 274; Garrett, Proverbs, 238; Whybray, 413; Longman, 526), following the plural subject, reads the Hebrew pron. suff. 3 ms as a plural “ihrem Vater” (“their father”), while Murphy (Proverbs, 226) reads the subject in the singular and the pronominal suffix in plural: “A generation: they curse their father.” De Wette (p. 393, as well as Ewald, 250; Delitzsch, Commentary, 284; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 161; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Baruq, Le livre des Proverbes, 222; Sauer, Sprüche, 103; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 495; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 604; Lelièvre and Mailhot, Commentaire 19–31, 308; Clifford, Proverbs, 259; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 865; Sæbø, Sprüche, 367; Steinmann, Proverbs, 589) reads the singular “seinem Vater”—“its (his) father.”
The Mūnah on וָּשֵׁם also indicates a close relation to the following verb קֵלֵל, which upholds the disjunctive accent ʼatḥnāḥ as the principal division of the first half of the verse that would be translated as “alike a generation that curses his father.”

The wāw consecutivum follows the dependent clause with דְּמָּאָרָּה as the direct object and its predicate, יְבָרֵך, which is also in the Pi ʼel impf. The verb יְבָרֵך with its negation is equivalent to the prev ious verb, קֵלֵל. The negation of the root בְּרֵכ is very rare in the MT. Of all the three hundred fifty-six occurrences, only four are negated with the particle לו (Num 23:25; 2 Kgs 4:29; Job 31:20; Prov 30:11) and, thus, emphasize the legal and moral standing of the person being punished. The Rēhîa ʼmuṯraš on וָּשֵׁם is a pre-tone disjunctive accent to the following Sillûq.

The translation of v. 11αβ would be “and does not bless his mother.”

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261 GKC, §140b; 143a.
262 The LXX again translates the sentence more formally as τῆν δὲ μητέρα οὐκ εὐλογεῖ (“who does not bless the mother”). The Vg, which took into consideration the singular suffix, translates quae non benedicit matri sae (“which does not bless his mother”). The Syr again introduces a dependent sentence with the preposition Δ to the noun מַעֲרָע and the Pʼal impf. of בְּרֵכ reading מַעֲרָע וּלְאֶת־אִמֶּו (“and not bless his mother [not give the blessing to his mother]”). The Tg follows this, but also adjusts the Syriac syntax with the emphatic singular of the noun אֶמֶּה with 3 ms pron. suff. and Paʼel part. of בְּרֵכ and reads: וְלָאֵיתָא מַעֲרָע וּלְאֶת־אִמֶּה מַבְרֵך (“and to his mother does not give the blessing” [cf. DJPA, 61]). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 58) translates the emphatic state of וָּשֵׁם in the plural form as “und ihrer Mutter unglück wünschen” (“and those who wish unhappiness to their mother”), as does Doederlein (Sprüche, 189; similarly Delitzsch, Commentar, 284; Toy, Commentary, 256; Oesterley, Proverbs, 274; Garrett, Proverbs, 238; Whybray, 413; Longman, Proverbs, 526) “und ihrer Mutter Unheil wünschen” (“and wish their mother misfortune”), while Sauer (Sprüche, 103) reads in the singular “und seiner Mutter nicht Segen wünscht” (“and does not wish blessing to his mother”). De Wette (p. 393, as well as Kamphausen, Sprüche, 368; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 161; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Sauer, Sprüche, 102; Ringgren and Zimmerli, 115; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 222; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 495; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverb, 604; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308; Clifford, Proverbs, 259; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 865; Sebo, Sprüche, 367; Steinmann, Proverbs, 589) reads the phrase in singular “und segnet seine Mutter nicht” (“and does not bless his mother”). Ewald (p. 250) in the same way emphatically has “und nimmer seine Mutter segnet” (“and never blesses his mother”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 358) omits the pronounal suffix and reads “und wünscht der Mutter niemals Glück” (“and never wishes happiness to the mother”).
The verbless noun-adjective-noun clause presents the principal action\textsuperscript{264} in the verse. The preceding action in v. 11, represented by the curse-blessing, links to the verb טָמֵא ("become unclean," cf. Lev 5:3; 11; 13; 15). The expression טָהוֹר ("pure eyes") found in Hab 1:13 is attributed to God in relation to human faithlessness and wickedness. The ב is a particle of manner and describes the attitude with which a misleading action takes place.\textsuperscript{265} The dual construct with the suff. 3 ms pron. of the noun עַיִּן is used here in the dynamic figurative sense of the "spiritual reality"\textsuperscript{266} of a person (cf. Ps 18:28; Prov 6:17). The adjective טָהוֹר cannot modify the construct בְעֵינָיו because of the lack of number and gender concord but simply means "Generation, pure in its eyes."

\textsuperscript{263} The LXX uses in the phrase δίκαιον ἑαυτὸν κρίνει ("[the progeny] who judges itself as righteous or a false keeper of the law") that is equal to ἁμαρτωλός ("the sinner," cf. Ps 5:13; 7:10; 33:2; 36:12; Prov 11:1; 17:15). Similarly the Vg also reads: sibi munda videtur ("who has seen himself as pure"), where the adjective mundus is regularly related to the purifications of sins (cf. Ps 18:13; 50:4; Sir 38:10). The Syr, this time, does not insert the preposition L as in v. 11a, but adapt the Hebrew sentence according to its context, reading it in an appositional context ("the generation, that is pure in the eyes of its soul"). In a similar way, the Tg translates ("the generation that is pure in its eyes," cf. DJBA, 856). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as Toy, Commentary, 526; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Longman, Proverbs, 526; cf. Szabó, Sprüche, 367) reads the sentence also in apposition with the plural form of the pron. suffix: "Es gibt (Leute) die, wenn auch rein in ihren eigenen Augen" ("There is [a people] who, though pure in their own eyes"). Similarly Doederlein (Sprüche, 189, as well as Delitzsch, Commentary, 284; Oesterley, Proverbs, 274) reads "Leute, die in ihren Augen rein" ("People, clean in their eyes"). Frankenberg (Sprüche, 161; likewise Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 222) reads "Ein Geschlecht dass rein nach seiner Einbildung" ("A lineage that is pure in its imagination"). Sauer (Sprüche, 103; similarly Alto Schönkel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 604) reads "Ein Geschlecht das vor sich selbst rein scheint" ("a lineage that appears pure to itself") and Meinhold (Sprüche, 495): "Eine Clique wo man sich mit seinen Augen fur rein einsicht" ("a clique, where by own eyes perceives itself as pure"). By contrast, Ewald (p. 250, as well as Toy, Commentary, 526; Schneider, Sprüche, 160) reads the sentence in the vocative: "O Geschlecht nach seinem dunkel rein" ("O lineage, after its arrogance [present itself] pure"), and Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 308) reads "Quelle race! Qui se croit propre" —"What a race! It believes to be right").

\textsuperscript{264} GKC, §141b.


\textsuperscript{266} Nola J. Opperwall, "Eye," ISBE 2:249.
The circumstantial wāw offers a detail concerning the preceding condition. Two states, false purity (unrighteousness) and lack of contrition, are presented simultaneously here. The noun ḫēṣ, besides its literal meaning of “dirt” and “dung” (Deut 23:14; 2 Kgs 18:27), also has the metaphorical meaning of moral or spiritual “filthiness” (Isa 4:4). Here, in Prov 30:12, the metaphorical antithesis clean-unclean with the 3 ms pron. suff. is presented as the cause of a person’s false approach to religious righteousness, closely related to cultic purification. The predicate ﬂāt (“to be washed”), in the Pu’al pf. (“been washed”), presents the agent of the noun ḫēṣ (cf. Lev 22:6; 2 Kgs 5:13). The Law prescribes the excommunication of a permanently unclean person (טַמֵא) in Num 19:20 we read: אִּיש אֲשֶּר־יִּטְמָא וְלֹא יִּתְחַטָא וְנִּכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶּש הַהִּֽוא מִֿתוֹךְ הַקָּהָל (“a man who will be unclean and who will not cleanse himself, that person has to be excommunicated from the congregation”). Unclean people among clean people also evoke God’s judgment of purification on the nation through war and desolation (cf. Is 4:4).²⁶⁹ The Rēbhîa '}

²⁶⁷ The Greek expression τὴν δὲ ἐξοδον αὐτοῦ οὐκ ἀπένιψεν (“but its dung did not wash”) is adversative here and could metaphorically refer to the mouth, unclean speech or deeds but also represent a euphemistic expression for defecation. The Vg’s reading is circumstantial and refers to an action that take place at the same time as the action in the previous sentence: tamen non est lota a sordibus suis (“while of its dirt is not washed”). The Syr also follows the Hebrew and reads ﻭمَزِيِّتِهَ لَا ﻋِيِّندُه (“while of its dung is not washed”). The Tg follows the Syr syntax as well as the choice of the words ﻭمَزِيِّتِهَ لَا ﻋِيِّندُه (“while of its dung is not washed”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59; as well as Doederlein, Sprüche, 198; Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 358; De Wette, 393; Delitzsch, Commentary, 284; Toy, Commentary, 526; Oesterley, Proverbs, 274; Sauer, Sprüche, 102; Scott, Proverbs, 178; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 222; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 865; Murphy, Proverbs, 226; Clifford, Proverbs, 259) reads here “von ihrem (seinem) Unrath (Unflath) doch nicht gewaschen sind” (“are not washed from their (its) filth”). Ewald (p. 250, as well as Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Schneider, Sprüche, 160; Plöger, Sprüche, 352) reads “von ihrem Schmutze nicht gewaschen” (“not washed of its dirt”) and Meinhold (Sprüche, 495), following the LXX, reads “von eigenen Kot nicht gewaschen ist” (“is not washed of its own excrement”). Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 604) has here “e non lava le sue brutture” (“and does not wash its dirt”). Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 308) reads here descriptively “…et ne s'est même pas torchée” (“that does not even cease”).


²⁶⁸ Cf. Watts, Isaiah 1–33, 50.
muğras is a pre-tone disjunctive accent preceding the Sillûq. The translation of v. 12 is “Generation pure in its eyes despite not having washed its filth.”

The relative clause comprises a dual noun with the plural form of the perfect of the verb of the extension רָמָּה עֵינַיִּם representing metonymically a “supercilious character.” The predicate in the plural רָמָה עֵינַיִּם does not match the singular subject רוֹד, while the dual עֵינַיִּם as the direct object with the singular suffix עֵינָיו (cf. 3 mp suff. עֵינֵיהֶּם in Gen 37:25) should be read with the comprehensive phraseological meaning of “look at those eyes” in the light of the grammaticalized pronoun כָּה as an emphatic verbal imperative of the illustrative phrase.\textsuperscript{272} The

\textsuperscript{270} In the LXX, the verb רָמָּה is read in the singular ὑψηλοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἔχει (“who has high eyes”), while the Vg keeps the plural form of verb cuius excelsi sunt oculi (“whose eyes are high”). The Syr follows the Hebrew structure and reads רָמַּה עֵינַיִּם (“the generation—look how high are its eyes”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59) changes the 3 ms pron. suff. to 3 pl. pron. suff. “(Leute), die ihre Augen erheben” (“[People], who raise their eyes”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 189) links the expression for eyes to the nose and translates: “Leute die ihre Nasen hoch tragen” (“people, who hold their noses high”). De Wette’s translation (p. 393; cf. Schneider, Sprüche, 160; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 222) is close to Müntinghe’s except for the singular form of the pron. suff. “Ein Geschlecht, wie erheben seine Augen” (“A lineage, how elevated [are] its eyes”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 358) reads here “Eine Klasse von Menschen erhebt die Augen stolz” (“A class of people elevates eyes proudly”) and Ewald (p. 250; cf. Sauer, Sprüche, 103; Oesterley, Proverbs, 274; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308) has again the vocative “O Geschlecht, wie stolz sind deine Augen” (“O lineage, how proud are its eyes”), while Alonso Schkel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 604) read gente dagli occhi superbi (“people with proud eyes”) and Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 865) translates “a generation of arrogant eyes.” Kamphausen (Sprüche, 387) reads “Ein Geschlecht, wie hoch trägt es die Augen” (“the lineage, how high it carries the eyes”) and Frankenberg renders (Sprüche, 161; cf. Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Sæbs, Sprüche, 367) “Ein Geschlecht, dessen Augen wunden wie hochmutig sind” (“those eyes wound how haughty are”). Meinhold (Sprüche, 495) translates “Eine Clique, wie hoch erhebt man die eigenen Augen” (“a clique, how high are raised his own eyes”) and Toy (Commentary, 526) “Men who look haughtily.” Oesterley (Proverbs, 274; cf. Murphy, Proverbs, 226; Clifford, Proverbs, 259) introduces here the exclamation: “Oh how lofty are their eyes!” while Steinmann (Proverbs, 599) renders “a certain kind of person: how haughty and arrogant he is!”


\textsuperscript{272} Waltke and O’Connor ((1990), 113–14, read here the “exclamatory mâ.” By contrast, W. A. van der Weiden (Le Livre des Proverbes: Notes philologiques [Rome, BIP, 1970] 43) following H. D. Hummel (“Enclitic
phrase “lift up the eyes” usually refers to the self-spirit, self-sufficiency, as as opposed to humbleness and submission to God. The phrase could recall v. 1 and the appeal not to be submitted to God (Ps 131:1), where “heart-mind-eyes as vehicles of pride are combined” in Ps 18:28; 101:5; Prov 21:4 and Jer 45:5. The accentuation of v. 13a corresponds to that of v. 11a and 12a, with the simultaneous action in both sentences of vv. 13a and 13b. The translation of the first clause of v. 13 is as follows: “Generation: look at those eyes, how haughty they are!”

Mem in Early Northwest Semitic, Especially Hebrew,” JBL 76 [1957] 85–107 translates here: “une génération, dont les yeux sont combien hautains” (“a generation, whose eyes are so haughty”).


The dual αὐτῶν ἄτακτῶν can derived from the verb στέμνει (“to fly”) and thus “flutter” or στέμνεται (“the bird”) that is characterized by its wings whose shape resembles to human eyebrows. For a different understanding of the dual αὐτῶν ἄτακτῶν, see Clines, Job 1–20, 71 n. 9c.

The LXX renders the Hebrew Niph’al plural נשׂאות as a passive singular and reads τοῖς δὲ βλεφάροις αὐτῶν ἄτακτῶν (“or lifts up its eyelids”). The Vg uses the predicate sunt only once for both clauses, reading et palpebrae eius in alta subrectae (“and their eyelids [are] set on high”). The Syr, with the “plural” pronominal suffix and the plural form of the noun ἄτακτο (“blink of the eye” or “eyelid”) plus Pa’el part. of Δακ (to lift up) translates the Hebrew clause as a circumstantial clause δακτροφυγίζοντων (“while lifting up its eyelids”). The Tg follows the Syr, but changes the singular participle to the plural form of Pa’el and reads ἄτακτοι τῶν ἀπεκτέστων (“while its eyebrows are high”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59), by contrast, reads here “und trotzig auf andere herabsehen” (“and arrogantly look down on others”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 189) reads similarly “und unrechtlich auf andere herabblicken” (“and contemptuously look down on others”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 358) and De Wette (p. 393) staying closer to the LXX translate “wie hoch trägt es seine Augenlider” (“how high it lifts its eyelids”). Similar is Ewald’s (p. 250) and Delitzsch’s (Commentary, 284; cf. Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 495; Clifford, Proverbs, 259) translation: “und seine Wimpern hoch getragen” (“and its eyelashes raised high”) while Sauer (Sprüche, 103; the same Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 865) reads “und hochmütigen Wimpern” (“and haughty [are] its eyelashes.” Frankenberg (Sprüche, 162; cf. Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Oesterley, Proverbs, 274; Baruc, Le livre des Proverbes, 222; Sæbø, Sprüche, 367) has “und dessen Wimpern sich überheben” (“and whose eyelashes are exalted”), while Gemser (Sprüche, 80; cf. Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308) “und stolz seine Wimpern” (“and proud [are] its eyelashes” and Scott (Proverbs, 178; so too Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 604) renders “his glance haughty.” Schneider (Sprüche, 160) has here “und stolz seine Blicke” (“and proudly its looks”). Toy (Commentary, 526) reads “and supercilious bearing!” and Murphy (Proverbs, 226) “how lofty their orbs!” while Steinmann (Proverbs, 599) translates “how haughty and arrogant he is.”
is used in the MT to depict a periodical, rather than permanent, action (cf. Ezek 1:19.20.21; Dan 11:14), which metaphorically refers to “blinking,” “fluttering” or “grimacing.” Since the phrase is emphatic here and the eyelids as well as eyelashes and eyebrows together with the eyes, nose and mouth express grumpiness, anger, conceit, contemplation, amazement or astonishment, the Hebrew expression might also denote facial movements as a tantum plurale (cf. Doederlein, Sprüche, 189; Job 16:16; Ps 11:4), “grimacing” (cf. Scott, Proverbs, 182). The proud character of v. 12 expresses himself in proud action in v. 13, which doubles the transgression toward God. The Rēbhîa ‘muğraš on והן, a pre-tone disjunctive accent, precedes the Sillûq on והן and marks the last tone-syllable of the verse. The translation of the entire verse would be as follows:

“Generation: look at those eyes, how haughty they are while blinking (with) its eyelids (grimacing with its face).”
The clause with the dual construct of שִּנָיו (‘tooth’) and the absolute plural form of חֶרֶב (‘sword,’ ‘knife’) is not the same as the construct form חַרְבֻּות צֻרִים (‘stony knives’) in Josh 5:2–3. The main subject, דּוֹר, remains with the disjunctive accent Mehuppakh légarmēh and the Mūnāh on חֲרָבֻ֣וֹת signifies a close relation with שִּנָיו, while the disjunctive Zarqâ on שִּנָיו and the following conjunctive Galgal on מַאֲכָל֪וֹת and wāw signify an interpunction sign after שִּנָיו. The very rare accent Galgal together with the Zarqâ, apart from Proverbs 30 occurs only four times in the entire book (Prov 8:34; 23:31; 24:12.24), while in Proverbs 30 it occurs three times (vv. 14, 16, 17), regularly as the marker of an interpunctional sign such as a colon (cf. Prov 23:29; 24:12, 24). The phrase would be read as “Generation, with its teeth like swords.”

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276 The LXX translates the nominal Hebrew clause with the copula ἔχει: μαχαίρας τοῦς ὀδόντας ἔχει (“that has knives instead of teeth”). The Vg reads quae pro dentibus gladios habet (“that instead of teeth has swords”). The Syr introduces, here again, the relative particleܕ and the enclitic form of 3 fp pron.ܐܢܝܢ, reading the clause in the following wayܕܪܐܕܣܦܣܪܐܢܝܢܫܢܘܗܝ (“the generation [m. sg.], whose swords [m. pl.] are [f. pl.] its teeth [m. pl. + 3 ms]”). The Tg corrects the fem. enclitic into the masc. and reads the clause with the relative particle as followsܕܪܐܕܣܦܣܪܐܢܝܢܫܢܘܗܝ (“the current whose swords are its teeth”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as De Wette, 394; Ewald, 250; Delitzsch, Commentary, 284; Kamphausen, Sprüche, 386; Frankenberger, Sprüche, 162; Toy, Commentary, 526; Oesterley, Proverbs, 274; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 222; Garrett, Proverbs, 238; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115; Scott, Proverbs, 178; Sauer, Sprüche, 103; Schneider, Sprüche, 160; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 495; Longman, Proverbs, 526; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 865; Sæbø, Sprüche, 367; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599) “so gibt auch Leute deren (dessen) Zähne Schwerter” (“as well as [people] whose teeth are swords”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 189; so also Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 604; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308; Clifford, Proverbs, 259) “Leute deren Zähne Dolchen” (“people whose teeth [are] daggers”) and Murphy (Proverbs, 226): “A generation: swords their teeth,” while Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 358) reads the clause progressively as “macht zu Schwertern ihre Zähne” (“makes their teeth swords”).

The lexeme מַאֲכָלוֹת is probably a derivative of the verb לֶאֱכַל ("to eat"), with the significance of some kind of eating utensil, often corresponding to a "knife." In addition, the lexeme מַאֲכָלוֹת is rare (cf. Gen 22:6, 10) and regularly parallel to מָשָׁכַע, with the meaning of "jawbone" or "molars" in the plural. The additional accent of Meţeg precedes the 'olē wēyorēd (the BHQ, p. 55 mistakenly omits the Mērēkâ). The translation of the phrase would be "its molars like knives."

The infinitive construct לֶּאֱכַל opens a subordinate purpose clause, where the verb

a. ולֶאֱכַל נְיִי (278, 304) renders here "and commands its molars to...". The Syr reads מַאֲכָלוֹת מְתַלְעַת ("and knives [are] its biters"). Delitzsch (Commentary, 284) as well as Sauer, Sprüche, 103 and Meinhold, Sprüche, 495) has "Kinnladen" ("jaws"). Frakenberg (p. 162, as well as Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Oesterley, Proverbs, 274; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 115) reads "und dessen Gebiss Messe sind" ("and its bites are the knives"), while Toy (Commentary, 526) renders here "their mouths armed with knives;" and Garrett (Proverbs, 239): "whose jaws are set with knives." Barucq (Le livre des Proverbes, 222, as well as Schneider, Sprüche, 160; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, Commentary, 226) reads "pour denture des couteaux" ("for teeth knives") and Sneider (p. 160, likewise Clifford, Proverbs, 259 and Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 865): "dessen Kinnbacken Messer" ("its jaws knives"), while Scott (Proverbs, 178) reads here "whose jaws are (like) butcher knives" and Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 308) have here "et les incisives des hauchois" ("and incisors choppers").

The Greek expression in the resulting clause καὶ κατασκαλίζων τοῖς ταπεινοῖς ἀπὸ τῆς γῆς ("and devour the needy from the earth") expresses the same idea of annihilation of the righteous by the purpose clause in the Vg: ut comedat inopes de terra ("that he might consume the needy from the land"). The Syr reads here the complete extermination of poor: מַאֲכָלוֹת מָמַטְלַע ("to annihilate poor men from the earth"). The Tg uses the Pā'āl infinitive preformative מָגָל ("to annihilate poor men from the earth") Stuart (p. 411) proposes reading the partitive מַאֲכָלוֹת מָמַטְלַע as מַאֲכָלוֹת מָמַטְלַע מְתַלְעַת ("to annihilate poor men from the earth") to "consume the wretched, who belongs to the land." Ewald (p.250) reads "die Dulder zu verzehren aus der Erde"—"to eat the sufferer from the earth." Schneider (Sprüche, 160) reads similarly "um weg fressen von der Erde Unglücklichen" ("to consume unfortunates from the earth"). Frankenberg (Sprüche, 161, as well as Gemser, Sprüche, 80; cf. Delitzsch, Commentary, 284) placed both objects under a common predicate and reads: "um zu fressen die Elenden aus dem Lande weg und die Armen aus den Menschen weg" ("to eat the wretched from the earth, and the needy from the people"). Meinhold (Sprüche, 494) renders similarly: "die Elenden von der
in the infin. form shifts the meaning from hypothetical “consumption,” “annihilation” or “bringing to nothingness” in v. 1 to the actual consumption of the just in v. 14b.\(^{280}\) The infinitive has two vocables as its objects, which explain the kind of prey (מְתַלְעוֹת). The adjective עָנִּי refers to the extreme “affliction” of a person deprived of justice and rights (מִּשְפָּט), which frequently involves his crying out directly to God (cf. Deut 24:14) and God’s act of salvation (יִשְׁעָה, cf. Exod 3:17; Deut 24:15; 26:7; 2 Sam 22:28; 2 Kgs 14:26; Pss 9:19; 10:12; 12:6; Is 3:15).\(^{281}\) The adjective is emphatic here, with the meaning “unprotected.” In addition, the noun אֶּרֶּץ with the preposition מִן is synecdochic here and expresses a warning against ungodliness and wickedness, and the decisive action by God’s promise “to sweep it off the land” (Prov 2:21–22). The accents מִנַּֽלֶאֱכֻל עֲנִּיִּים underscore the close relation between the stressed words and the following lexeme מֵאֵֶ֑רֶּץ, which with the disjunctive accent °athn ḥ concludes a subordinate clause, which should be read as “to consume (bring to nothingness) the unprotected of the land.”\(^{282}\)

Erde weg zu verschlingen” (“to devour the wretched from off the earth”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59; as well as Toy, Commentary, 526; Oesterley, Proverbs, 274; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 222), by contrast, translates עֲנִּיִּים as the “poor” and reads: “um die Armen aus dem Lande…” (“and the poor from the land”), as does Sauer (Sprüche, 103): “um die Armen vom Lande zu vertreiben” (“to drive poor out of the land”), while Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 359) and Plöger (Sprüche, 353) translate the term as “needy” and reads: “und aufzufressen die Bedürftig (Niedern) von der Erde” (“and devour the needy from the earth”). Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 604; similarly Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 308; Clifford, Proverbs, 260) read “per estirpare gli umili dalla terra”— “to eradicare the humble from the earth.” Steinmann (Proverbs, 599) renders here a purpose clause: “in order to devour the oppressed people from the earth,” while Scott (Proverbs, 178) translates the verb with the participle, “devouring the oppressed from the land” as does Murphy (Proverbs, 266) “devouring the needy from the land.” G. R. Driver (“Problems in the Hebrew Text of Proverbs,” Bib 32 [1951] 173–97, here 196) reads the infinitive לֶּאֱכֻל in the sense of “is likely to eat the needy... and poor...” as a predicate of a nominal subject.


\(^{281}\) Cf. Prov 16:19 and the difference between prey and oppressed.

\(^{282}\) The intention of the author is to highlight real nothingness. The nothingness is not a speculation about God (v. 1) but deviation from or contempt for his commandments (v. 14).
The second object of the infinitive לאכל with the consecutive wâw is the noun אביוון, which might represent the need for basic food and safety (cf. Is 14:30; Amos 5:12) and evokes the antonym מאכלת. The noun does not denote physical need here but rather the spiritual need for God’s justice. In addition, the noun אדם is also synecdochic and together with the noun אביוון forms a poetic tautology with the preceding phrase עניים מארץ. Thus, the last phrase should be read “and the needy (for God) from humanity.”

The bh a±mu raš on Воо́ן, a strong pre-tone disjunctive accent, stands in close relation with the final Sillûq on אדם, which concludes the verse with the last tone-syllable. The third Petuhah already shows the end of the unit, although the additional sentence of clarification in the first part of v. 15 has the same main subject, דור, as does v. 14. Thus, v. 14 without the following additional clarification reads “to consume (bring to nothingness) the unprotected of

283 The same tautology is expressed in Greek: καὶ τοῖς πάνηται αὐτῶν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων (“and those miserable from humans”). The Vg reads the same: et pauperes ex hominibus (“and the miserable from humans”). The Syr uses a synonym for the poor and its wâw should be read as the alternative ܒܝܫܐܕܒܢܝܢܫܐ (“or the poor men from humanity”). The Tg follows the Hebrew expression with the  olmadığות ובה נב נמשה —“and the oppressed people from humanity.” Stuart (p. 411) again sees here a partitive מין: “and the needy among men.” Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59) reads the second compound וְאֶּבְיוֹנִּים as the “wretched:” “die Elenden aus der Menschheit aufzufressen” (“who devours the wretched from humanity”). Ewald (p. 250) reads “und die Hilflosen aus den Menschen” (“and the helpless from the people”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 359) renders “die Armen von Menschen wegzulaufen” (“to run off the poor from the people”), while Ringgren and Zimmeri (Sprüche, 115, as well as Schneider, Sprüche, 160; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 495; Sæbø, Sprüche, 367) subordinate the clause to the first predicate and read “und die Armen aus Menschent” (“and the poor from the people”). Toy (Commentary, 526, as does Oesterley, Proverbs, 274) has here “needy from among men” and Clifford (Proverbs, 260) “the poor from the human race.” Steinmann (Proverbs, 599) reads “poor people from among humanity.” Based on Koehler’s suggestion, Dahood (Proverbs and Northwest, 57–58) and Sauer (Sprüche, 102), due to the parallelism of מארץ in v. 14b and אדם in v. 14c, propose to read v. 14c not as מֵאָדָם but מֵאֲדָמָה וְאֶּבְיוֹנִּים (“the needy from the land”). This emendation is accepted by scholars like Scott (Proverbs, 178), McKane (Proverbs, 652), Barucq (Le livre des Proverbes, 222), Gmemser (Sprüche, 80), Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 604), Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 308).

284 Verse 14 should not be read as a climax of the transgressions as E. Gerstenberger (“עָנָה,” TDOT 11:242) points, but as a description of real ungodliness in v. 1 and elaborated in v. 11–14.
the land or the needy (for God) of humanity.\textsuperscript{285}

Another metalepsis comes after the noun עלוקה in vv. 11–14, which extends until v.

17. The translation of the lexeme עלוקה, with the preposition ל not as spatial lämed
(cf. LXX and Vg) but lāmed of specification or similitude (“such as,” “alike”), as
the above footnote demonstrates, extends from the proper to the common noun.287
The emendation of the preposition ל to ל as the particle of correspondence (cf.
לְ by Grätz, Exegetische, 438) is not necessary to grasp the meaning of the
prepositional clause with the noun עֲלוּקָה, a hapax in the MT. 288 The noun עֲלוּקָה
is attested only in Babylonian Aramaic with the synonym עֲלָא ("leech")289 and in
Syriac יִלְכָּא ("leech"). Arabic also has the same root, ‘alaq, with the same
meaning עִלָּא ("leech"). This common Semitic usage of the root ḥaq has to be taken
into consideration.290 The Hebrew root should not be associated with the Arabic
'alaq (‘h)q) with the meaning “to love” (cf. Gluck, 367ff.). According to biology,
“the leech is a segmented worm, which is hematophagous, and predominantly a
bloodsucker that feeds on blood from vertebrate and invertebrate animals with two
suckers, one at each end.”291 The leech uses their “anterior sucker heads to connect
to prey for feeding and once attached, it uses a combination of muscles called

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287 Sauer (Sprüche, 105) reads here “Vom Blutegel” (“from the leech”) and Murphy (Proverbs, 232) “to the
leech,” while Meinhold (Sprüche, 504, as well as Plöger, Sprüche, 352) has “Der Blutegel” (“the Leech”). The study
of H. Schneider (“Die ‘Tochter’ des Blutegels in Spr 30:15,” Lex tua veritas [Ed. H. Groß and F. Mußner; Trier:
Junker-Festschrift, 1961] 257–264) finds in עֲלוּקָה the epithome of the Mediterranean parasite leech called
“Pferdeegel” (“horseleech”). The same idea has been taken over by Oesterley (Proverbs, 275) and Plaut (Proverbs,
304) who also read here “horseleech.” Instead, Scott (Proverbs, 178, as well as Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224;
Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 867; Clifford, Proverbs, 236; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599) translates the lexeme generally as
“the (a) leech” and Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 605) “la sanuisuga” (“the leech”). Delitzsch
(Commentary, 288) finds here “a generic name of certain traditional signification” and Toy (Commentary, 528,
likewise Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 116), because of the lack of the evidence, stays with
the proper name “Aluka” as an unknown biblical onomasticon. Instead, Gemsler (Sprüche, 80) emends the MT עֲלוּקָה
reading it as לָע לַקוּ “Es schlürfen und lecken” “(two greedy beings) who suck and lick”.
288 Hodgson, 85. Holden (p. 373) translates here: “They are like the horse-leech…”
289 Sokoloff, DJBA, 869, 883.
290 Cf. Kaltner, The Use of Arabic, 86.
291 S. Fogden and J. Proctor, “Notes on the Feeding of Land Leeches (Haemadipsa zeylanica Moore and H.
denders to press deep into the prey’s bloodstream… Over 90% of leeches feed solely on decomposing bodies and open wounds of amphibians, reptiles, waterfowl, fish, and mammals (including humans).”

A leech attaches itself when it bites into a wounded mammal, and it stays attached until it becomes full, at which point it falls off in order to digest. The idea of the leech as a parasite that opportunistically attaches itself to an open wound or injured animal could easily become the epitome of an ungodly, wicked person who “brings to nothingness the innocents from the earth” or “the needy (for God) from humanity” (cf. v. 14). Since blood corresponds to human physical existence, which is compatible with the spiritual life, the noun אֲלוּקָה in Prov 30:15 is a metaphorical expression of a character who is consuming the life force and, thus, can be related to the compound term אִישָּׁדָמִּים (“butcher” or “assassin,” cf. 2 Sam 16:8). The copulative מֶתֶּהַ shows the conjunction of the compound particle ל, while the disjunctive accent ‘azlā lēgarmeh is in an accentual relationship with the preceding context (cf. פֶּ֥ן אֶּשְׂבַַ֙ע׀ ָ in v. 9). The term אֲלוּקָה might be a cryptonym (the “Leech”) for the ungodly person


295 The demonology of leech is implausible due to lack of historical evidence. The Midrashic comparison of אֲלוּקָה to “paradise and sheol” (Rashi) gives enough evidence that the metalepsis אֲלוּקָה in late Judaism does not present the personality of a demon (thus Oesterley, Proverbs, 275), but primarily the personification of a certain place that would not necessarily be marked negatively. Cf. H. Seebass, “נֶפֶּש,” TDOT 9:512.

296 Dahood (Psalms I, 31) distinguishes the composed nouns אִישָּׁדָמִּים (“assassin,” cf. 2 Sam 16:8) and אִישָּׁדָמִּים (“idolator,” or “man of idolatry”) as derivations of the Qal participle of the verb דָּמָה (“to be like,” cf. Pss 5:7; 26:9; 59:3; 139:19; Isa 14:14). It is not necessary to emend the original term אִישָּׁדָמִּים (“assassin,” cf. 2 Sam 16:8; Pss 5:7; 26:9; 59:3; 139:19; Isa 14:14; Prov 29:10) due to the assassination was part of idolatry (child sacrifice), and thus the term could include the figurative meaning of “pagan,” “idolator.”
already presented in v. 1; reproached in v. 6 and closely described in vv. 11–14.

The construct state before the substantive in the plural “two daughters” is the regular construction of a number and noun in the MT. The LXX expression “three daughters” probably refers to the following repetition of the number three in vv. 15–31. The LXX also changes the context of the Hebrew imperatives הַב הַב as the proverbial construction ἰγαπήσει ἰγαπώμενα, which is quid pro quo an equal exchange or substitution for the dissatisfaction of the subject, the Leech. However, the plural בַּת does not represent equality between the leech and her daughters because the noun בת (“daughter”) per se is subservient to the noun mother or parent. Thus, by the teaching, instruction or order of the mother, the action of the daughters is determined. The daughters cannot be understood in the sense of partners, companions or friends, but exclusively as subservient followers or epigons (cf. the town with its satellite villages in Num 21:25; Josh 15:45; Judg 3:6; Neh 11:6).

297 The LXX, due to the following context, instead of two daughters reads τρεῖς θυγατέρες ἦσαν (“[of the leech] there are three daughters”), which Grätz (“Exegetische,” 438) understands as נַלְעָלָה יִזְכְּר נֵבָה (“three are daughters of her” [the leech]). Jaeger (pp. 218–19) explains the misreading of לַעֲלוּק שְתֵי בָנוֹת as לעלוק תשבענה—“like a leech which swears,” that corresponds to the following καὶ αἱ τρεῖς αὐταὶ οὐκ ἐνεπίμπλασαν αὐτήν (“three things which cannot satisfied her”), which the Greek translator interprets τῇ βδέλλῃ τρεῖς θυγατέρες ἦσαν … καὶ αἱ τρεῖς αὐταὶ οὐκ ἐνεπίμπλασαν (“like a leech’s three daughters that cannot be satisfied with three things”). The Vg correctly follows the Hebrew duae sunt filiae (“[by the leech] there are two daughters”). The Syr follows the LXX expression and reads תָּלָת עַלְוֵהוּ בְּנָה (“there are three daughters to her”), while the Tg has ברה ים בְּנָה (“two daughters”). Schneider (“Die ’Tochter:’” Sprüche, 257ff.) explains the horseleech as a worm with two sucker heads and thus appropriate to the metaphorical context of “Unersättlichkeit dieser Tiere” (“insatiability of these animals”). Scoralick (Sprichwörter, 1256) explains “Die zwei Töchter des Blutegels sind seine beiden Enden mit Saugpfropfen. Ihr Name ist Programm” (“the two daughters of the leech are its two ends with suckers. Her name speaks for itself”). Gemser (Sprüche, 80) reads here “zwei gierige Wesen eigentlich Töchter von Gib! Gib!” (“two greedy beings, actually daughters of Give! Give!”).

298 GKC, §134 1a.
299 Cf. GKC, §134c, n. 1.
300 The construction בַּת (cf. Job 30:29; Isa 13:21; 34:13; 43:20; Mic 1:8; ) cannot be simply translated “companion of the ostrich,” but refers to an animal that in its appearance is similar to the ostrich but is smaller and weaker than an ostrich.
this regard, the construction שְתֵי בָנוֹת metaphorically alludes to the two sucker heads of the leech, which are like two daughters with the same intention and function. The noun “daughters” expresses a very close, though not identical, relationship with the subject, the “Leech.” The Mērēkā shows a conjunctive connection with the following noun, while the recitative Zarkā introduces the punctuative sign of a colon. The translation of the construct is “two suckers.”

The two identical verbs in the Qal sing. masc. imper. of בָּה (“to give”) are not in juxtaposition with the feminine subject (עֲלוּקָה בָּנוֹת), and might refer to the masculine noun דוֹר as the main subject of v. 14 or to another metalepsis that resembles שְתֵי בָנוֹת, “the Leech” i.e., “suck-suck.” The feminine imperative in the Qal of the verb בָּה is not attested in the MT, while the imp. ms תֵּן (“give!”) is frequent (cf. 2 Kgs 4:24, 34; Pss 28:4; 72:1; Prov 9:9; Jer 9:14). The MT presents the same imperative מָּב with the paragogic hē that became purely hortatory—“come on!” (cf. Gen 11:3, 4; 29:21; 30:1; 38:16; 47:15; Exod 1:10; Judg 1:15; 1 Sam 14:41; Ps 60:13). A similar form of the imperative of the פ״י verb occurs for the verb דַע (“to know”), as דָּע, or דִָֽע (cf. Gen 20:7; 1 Sam 20:7; Job 2:27; Jer 15:15). Since the

301 The Greek construction is interpretative, ἠγαπήσει ἠγαπώμεναι—“love for love.” Jäger (p. 218) sees in the LXX’s translation the Hebrew verb בָּה (“to love”). The Vg, reading the accent Zarkā on בָּנוֹת as the introduction to direct speech, links v. 15a and v. 15b with the catch word dicentes and reads dicentes adfer adfer! Thus, the Vg reads two imperatives in the Hiph‘l of בָּה (“to bring”), which should be read in the Hebrew (“saying: Bring! Bring!”). The Syr reads the Hebrew imperatives as the adjective חָּבִיב in fp חָּבִיב (“the dear ones”), while the Tg sees here the verb חָּבִיב (“to love”) in Al (BHQ, 56*) part. as מחָּבִיב (“the beloved ones”). Grätz (“Exegetische,” 439) also emends the Hebrew text, reading it as it follows: כָּלעֲלוּקָה וְלָעַל בָּנוֹת ("Like the Leech and her three daughters"). Gemser (Sprüche, 80) ignores the MT imperatives, linking them to the synonyms שְּפָיע ("suck and lick"). Muenscher (p. 253) instead adds “Give! Give! are their names” to the Hebrew text.
paragogic imperative/neqah has gone through a process of subjectification or grammaticalization, has multiple discourse functions, and is predominantly metaphorical and interjctional, the phonetically reduced ב Caleb might have the same usage here of dissatisfaction and constant torture that expresses the hostility of opposition (predator-prey). The מֶהַפָּסְקָה לֶעָרָםֶה breaks the segue into the following word, while the מֶרֶקַח, the conjunctive accent, links the syntactic material with the following context. The first clause of v. 15 would be translated as “suck, suck—alike “Leech” with two suckers.”

**15.1: The numerical formula \( A \leq B \) in Prov 30:15b and Proverbs 30**

The two constructions with the identical subjects of the cardinal numbers שָלוֹשׁ and ארבע in Prov 30:15ff literally mean “they are three… four…” One possibility for the quantity of three that turns into four

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302 There are five scholarly approaches to v. 15. One opens a new section of the numerical sayings with v. 15. Another links vv. 15–16 with the the catch words (see Vg translation; cf. Schelling, *Salomonis regis*, 152–153; Doederlein, *Sprüche*, 190; De Wette, 394). The third approach isolates v. 15a as an added redactorial elaboration. Thus, Frankenberg (*Sprüche*, 162) holds that v. 15a (“Die Aluka hat zwei Töchter: her! her!”) is a post biblical gloss and later Aramaism. The fourth approach eliminates v. 15c as an additional work. Thus, Hitzig (p. 303) translates: “Aluka (Demon) hat zwei Töchter: gib her! gib her! Sie drei können nicht satt werden; (wie) die Unterwelt und verschlossener Schooss; die Erde wird nicht satt des Wasser; das Feuer sagt nicht: genug” (‘Aluka [a demon] has two daughters: give here! Give here! These three cannot be satisfied, (like) the underworld and closed womb, and the earth that is not satisfied with water, the fire that does not say ‘enough’”). The fifth approach isolates v. 15b as the opening verse of the formula *three–four* of v. 17ff, while linking vv. 15a and 16 as an intrinsic segue. Thus, Ewald (p. 256, followed by Grätz, “Exegetische,” 438) eliminates vv. 15b and 16, while he reads vv. 15a and 17 together as “Blutsaugerin zwei Töchter hat: her her,” Drei sagend: her her das Blut, Das Blut des bosen Kindes, Das Auge das des Vaters spottet, verschmäht der Mutter zu gehorchen, das hacken aus des Thales Raben und fressen aus die jungen Adler ” (“Bloodsucker has two daughters: ‘give give;’ Three say: give give the blood, the blood of the evil child, the eye that mocks the Father, disdaines to obey the mother, will take out the ravens of the valley and eat the young eagles”). Bickel (p. 294–95) follows Ewald’s proposal on the analogy between vv. 15a and 16 and reads: “(from) three that are not satisfied and four that never say enough: from the bloodsucker with two daughters: give! give! the grave and the womb; the earth that is not satisfied with water; and the fire that does not say enough.” Fox (*Proverbs 10–31*, 867) identifies the clause of v. 15a as an aphorism and called it *The Epitome of Greed.*
would be an additional measure (four) to the already existing quantities (three). Other possibilities include looking at the following numerical pattern $3\rightarrow 4$ as an instructional method of the riddle, the original rhetorical expression of a gnomic saying, a simple observation without a message, didactic efficiency, the ambiguity of art and knowledge, a formula essentially related to the phenomenon of parallelism, not absolute but relative certainty in numbers, and a numerically-based opposition of ideas founded on various observations and experiences. In this numerical expression, some scholars also see the public provocations by influential personalities in a particular society, while some suggest a reference to different sorts of public entertainment. The second numeral in the so-called staircase formula also hints at a redactorial correction that highlights the development of the basic idea, which is

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303 Based on the late Aramaic version of the Wisdom of Aḥikar from Elephantine, Friedrich Stummer (Der kritische Wert der altaramäische Aḥikartexte aus Elephantine [Münster: Aschendorff, 1914] 58 maintains that the numerical pattern is later redactorial work in Proverbs 30. See also Stuart (p. 415).

304 Naftaly Herz Tur-Sinai [Harry Torczyner] (“The Riddle in the Bible,” HUCA 1 [1924] 135–37) and later Kent and Burrows (Proverbs, 109) claim that the “numerical enigma” originally was a riddle and “this later and more elaborate composition shows that the original form was a question and an answer, but in any case the form is closely related to the enigma.” See also Garrett, Proverbs, 240. Against Tur-Sinai’s developed theory of riddle, Dan Pagis (“Toward a Theory of the Literary Riddle,” Untying the Knot: On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes [eds. Hasan-Rokem & D. Shulman; New York, Oxford University Press, 1996] 81-108) offered a theory of the numerical proverbs, not as a developing process of the literary composition of a riddle but rather as an original genre of proverbs. See also Murphy, The Tree of Life, 25.

305 Pagis, “Toward a Theory,” 103.

306 Toy, Commentary, 592.

307 McKane, Proverbs, 655.

308 Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1256.


310 Seow, Ecclesiastes, 190.

311 Gemser, Sprüche, 81; Sæbø, Sprüche, 369.

312 D. Kidner, Proverbs (Downers Grove: Inter Varsity, 1964) 180.


accentuated,\textsuperscript{315} or an additional \textit{automatism} that may be purely formal and ornamental,\textsuperscript{316} or even a kind of poetic phonetic style.\textsuperscript{317}

According to Roth, the numerical saying is a list of certain facts, fixed according to an exact and definite number.\textsuperscript{318} The majority of scholars see in \textit{numeralia} either a clarification or adjustment ("three and four" or "three, yea four"),\textsuperscript{319} an approximate alternative ("three or four"),\textsuperscript{320} a comparable poetic phenomenon ("three, indeed four")\textsuperscript{321} or a graded numerical saying ("three; four" or "three, four")\textsuperscript{322} that can be related to both the numerals three and four or a graded form ("three and fourth").\textsuperscript{323} The difficulty with the aforementioned positions is that the cardinal number אַרְבַע ("four") in Proverbs 30 does not follow the same pattern throughout vv. 15–32. In three cases, the numeral "four" has the same subject as the numeral "three" (vv. 15, 18, 29) and in another three cases the numeral four is followed by the negation לא (vv. 15, 18, 21), while in another three cases it is preceded by the consecutive \textit{wāw} (vv. 18, 21, 29). The numeral "three" appears only one time without the consecutive \textit{wāw} in v. 15, once is self-standing without the preceding numeral \textit{שָלוֹש} but followed by the consecutive \textit{wāw} with a personal pronoun (v. 24), and once is followed by the verb without the negation (v. 29). In short, the composition of the numerals of Proverbs 30 is as follows:

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{315} Delitzsch, \textit{Commentary}, 281.
\bibitem{317} Cyrus H. Gordon, \textit{Ugaritic Grammar: The Present Status of the Linguistic Study of the Semitic Alphabetic Texts from Ras Shamra} (AnOr 20; Rome: PIB, 1940) 6, 10, 34, 39.
\bibitem{321} Westermann, \textit{Roots}, 72, n. 63.
\bibitem{323} Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, \textit{I proverb}, 605; Steinmann, \textit{Proverbs}, 35.

\end{thebibliography}
v. 15, “there are (fem.) three… four (fem.)…”

v.18, “there are (masc.) three… and four (masc.)…”

v. 21, “under three (fem.)… and under four (fem.)…”

v. 24, “there are (masc.) four… and there are …”

v. 29, “there are (masc.) three… and four (masc)”

This random pattern “three… four…,” in Proverbs 30, can be noted in v. 24, where only the numeral “four” occurs and where, instead of the already well-established threefold “there are three… (and) four…,” pattern, one finds “there are four… and there are…” (cf. also only two things in v. 7). This example shows that the numeral “four” can stand by itself. Contrariwise, the numeral “three” is reality accomplished by the numeral “four.” In addition, in all four cases, the numeral “four” could be the correct number, not “three.”

This indicates that the problem lies not in the numeral “four” but rather in “three,” which looks as though it is incorrect and unnecessary (cf. also in Hos 6:2 “two→three; Amos 1:3–13; 2:1–6, “three→four,” and Job 5:19, “six→seven” or “seven→eight” in Mic 5:5). In Proverbs 30, on the other hand, the numeral “three” (cf. also Job 5:19; Amos 1–2 and Mic 5:5) does not seem superficial or additional but has a function as part of the chiastic structure in the particular segment. The convention of deriving a numerical conclusion from such an opening number does not serve as a

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327 The LXX switches the cardinal number “four” to the ordinal “fourth” and thus reduces the value of number “four,” subjecting it to the cardinal number “three.”
significant mnemonic device (thus Stevenson, “Mnemonic Use,” 30ff; Haran, “The Graded Numerical,” 238ff), but rather as a method for the chiastic scheme AA’ and BB’ of the literary segments (see The Composition and Structure of Proverbs 30). In this case, the number three is used to enclose the couplet chiastically ABB’ A’ between the opening number “three” and the completed number “four.” The couplet represents a chiastic structure. It is not a matter of approximation, i.e., “three or four,” but rather a type of stanza characterized by quatrains, which encapsulates the completed expression of the author with the definition “three, which are encapsulated in four.” Thus, the starting number “three” serves as the basis or setting number for enclosing the chiastic statement by the arch-number “four.”

Interpreting the concluding number “four” as an additional or ordinal number seems implausible, and the “parallel qualities” formula developed by Stevenson and Roth, i.e., \(x/x+1\), does not fit well with this numerical expression. In the same way, Gemser’s graded pattern \(x/x+1/x+2\) seems built on an incomplete form. Likewise, Gordon’s formula of the fractions \(\frac{1}{3}\) and \(\frac{1}{4}\) is to be rejected in light of Bea’s apt statement, “ganz eigenartig ist die Anwendung des Stilmittels der Zahlensteigerung auf Bruchzahlen” (“the application to the fraction of the stylistic device of the graded numerical saying is very strange.”) Weiss’ theory seems odd, too, in viewing the numerical pattern “three and four” as the components of the number “seven” or \(3+4=7\). The number four in the aforementioned examples is not additional (+1) but enclosing or concluding, while the content embraces the chiastic stanza from the opening number to the concluding number, and the correct formula should be \(A \leq B\) where the numeral \(A\) as a baseline number of quantity is completed in the number of \(B\) and, therefore, has to match the value of

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328 The auxiliary numerical pattern in Proverbs 30; Job 5; Amos 1–2 and Micah 5 is not the same as the numerical pattern of proximity in Qoh 11:2; Isa 17:6 or Judg 12:14; Job 1:3 and Ps 62:11–12.
330 Gemser, Sprüche, 80.
333 Cf. Delitzsch’s formula 4=3+1 (Commentary, 305).
the formula $A \leq B$. The complete value $(B)$, which is always higher than the baseline value $(A)$, is the concluding couplet structure $AA'$ and $BB'$ of the chiastic structure $ABB'A'$. If approximation were involved, the resulting number would be not “four” but also “three” or “five.” The purpose of the concluding number is not to bracket a range of options but to enclose the statement into a circle and narrow the conclusion. This could also be a reason why the wisdom and prophetic literature utilizes this formula, with which it demonstrates its enclosing and, thus, concluding or final statement. In this sense, the understanding of the formula $A \leq B$ would be: “Three things, enclosed in four things.” Since the expression most probably was followed by the gesticulation of the hands or arms, the translation of the formula $A \leq B$ would be: “Three things, encapsulated in four things.”

Since the short feminine independent pronoun $הֵן$ occurs in the MT “only after a prefix,” the usage of the long form of the pronoun $הֵנָה$ is without appreciable distinction and serves here as an emphatic pronoun, where a quantitative measurement is presented and modified by the numeral $שָלֹש$, which is composed of the longer form of the feminine cardinal number $שָלָה$ and indicates

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334 Analogically, it would be the same formula $A \leq B$ in Amos 1:3–13; 2:1–6; Job 5:19 and in Mic 5:5.
336 The LXX does have the numeral three as an exact number in the feminine form, which refers to τρείς θυγατέρες: αἱ τρεῖς αὕται (“three of these”), as well as the Vg, which utilizes the verb esse here and reads the numeral in the neuter as *tria sunt* (“three [things] are”). The Syr follows the Hebrew with its numeral $אֶלֶת$ (“they are [fem.] three”). The Tg sees in v. 15 a graded numerical saying from two (v. 15a) to three and four (v. 15b). Thus, the Tg reads here *גֶּבֶר שְּלֹשָׁה* (“they are [fem.] three”). Müntinghe (*Die Sprüche*, 59, as well as Ziegler, *Uebersetzung*, 360) inserts the existential verb “werden” here as “Drei werden…” (“three become…”). Doederlein (*Sprüche*, 191; as well as De Wette, 394; Bickell, 294) links the preceding v. 15 with the following material of v. 16 via the demonstrative pronoun “Diese drei…” (“these three…”). By contrast, Frankenberg (*Sprüche*, 162; as well as Toy, *Commentary*, 529; Barucq, *Le livre des Proverbes*, 224; Scott, *Proverbs*, 179) maintains that v. 15a is an additional graded proverb and the numerical pattern of v. 15b reads “Drei gibt’s die nicht” (“there are three which are not…”). Toy (*Commentary*, 529, as well as Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, *I proverbi*, 605) translates “three things” here.
337 BDB, 241; *Gesenius*, 2:281.
here “the amount of something not denoted by the modified noun.” The tendency to link the subject \( \text{שָלוֹש} \) to the preceding nouns the “Leech” and its two daughters (cf. Doederlein, *Sprüche*, 190ff. and De Wette, *Die Sprüche*, 394) would be a *contradictio in adiecto*, where the argument deals with the number two (i.e., “the Leech” and “its two suckers”) and not three (i.e., “the Leech,” “daughter one,” and “daughter two”). In addition, the thematic material on the insatiability of “the Leech” links the preceding argumentation with the following statements, which should be understood as comparisons to the preceding arguments. The translation of the first part of the sentence would be “three (things)...of these” (i.e., not what precedes but what follows).

The verb \( \text{שות} \), already analyzed in v. 9a, has a negative connotation in Proverbs 30. In addition, the negation \( \text{לֹא} \) opens the metaphorical archaic preposition “without.” The verb of \( \text{שות} \) (“to eat enough” or “be sated”) shifts here from the literal meaning of eating to the abstraction of human dissatisfaction (cf. Ps 63:6). The Mūnāh on \( \text{לֹא} \) marks the second conjunctive accent, while the disjunctive accent \( \text{אִֽנָּה} \) marks the principal division of the first half of the verse, which would be translated as

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339 Cf. Ibid., §2.7.1.
340 It seems that Roth (Numerical, 22, 34) as well gives the same value to the numeral three as to the numeral four.
341 Thus, Hodgson (p. 85) reads here “as the progeny of the horseleech.” Cf. also Holden, 373.
342 The LXX reads the Hebrew negation as \( \text{οὐκ ἐνεπίμπλασαν αὐτήν} \) (“who do not satisfy themselves”). The Vg uses the neuter plural \( \text{insaturabilia} \) (“insatiable”). The Syr introduces a relative particle here and reads the verb in Pāl part. pf. \( \text{דַּלֵּא}, \text{מַסְחֵג} \) (“that are not filling”). The Tg does the same: \( \text{דַּלַּא} \) (“that are not filling”). Müntinghe (*Die Sprüche*, 59, as well as Ziegler, *Uebersetzung*, 360; De Wette, 394; Ewald, 257, Frankenborg, *Sprüche*, 162) utilizes the negation of the verb “satt sein” (“be full”), while Doederlein (*Sprüche*, 190) translates with adjective “unersättlich” (“insatiable”). Toy (*Commentary*, 529, as well as Oesterley, *Proverbs*, 275; Fox, *Proverbs 10–31*, 686) reads “satisfied” and Clifford (*Proverbs*, 263) “sated.”
“Three things are without satisfaction.”

The numeral “four” belongs to the chiastic formula $A \leq B$, where the scheme “three, encapsulated in four” encloses the stanza or statement. The negation of the predicate $רָאָם$ in the Qal 3 perfect plural “to say” is symbolically linked to the previous verb and both are associated with the “mouth.” The noun $וֹן$ (“riches,” “wealth”) hyperbolically means “sufficiency” or an action that can be controlled. The translation of the two interjecting clauses would be as follows: “Three things are without satisfaction encapsulated in four that do not say: Enough!”

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344 The LXX understands the Hebrew cardinal form אַרְבַע as an ordinal number רָאָם in the feminine state, referring to the fourth daughter of a leech: יְהַטְּפָרָה (“the fourth”). The Vg also reads the Hebrew cardinal number as an ordinal in the neuter singular: quartum (“the fourth”). The Syr introduces a second relative clause here with a consecutive $וֹדָא$ and reads and four…”.

345 The LXX’s expression οὐκ ἠρκέσθη εἰπεῖν ικανόν (“[the fourth] does not say: enough is enough”) is closer to the Hebrew than the Vulgate’s quod numquam dicit sufficit (“[the fourth] that never says enough.” The Syr introduces a dependent clause here, which reads and four… (“and of four that do not say enough”). The Tg does the same: and four do not say enough” Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as Doederlein, Sprüche, 190; Ziegler, Übersetzung, 360; De Wette, 394; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 162) also introduces a consecutive $וֹדָא$ here, reading “und vier sagen nie: es ist genug!” (“and four say never: it is enough!”). By contrast, Ewald (p. 257), following the Syr and Tg, introduces a relative clause here: “vier die nie sagen ‘genug’” (“four, which never say: Enough!”). Toy (Commentary, 529) separates the two sentences with the inserted phrase “four say not: ‘Enough.’” Delitzsch (Commentary, 290) eliminates the first sentence as unnecessary, and reads only “Four things do not say: Enough!”

346 Cf. Clines, Job 1–20, 454.

347 BDB, 223; the particle conjunction יֵּֽן regularly expresses the satisfaction of the subject: “good!” (cf. Gen 30:4; Exod 10:29; Judg 8:7). Ben Yehudah (“The Edomite Language,” 114) sees in the Hebrew noun יֵּֽן the Edomite word “enough.”
This noun is frequent in the Book of Proverbs (nine times). Besides its usual form, שְָאֹל, there is also a shorter spelling, i.e., שְאֹל (cf. 1 Kgs 2:6; Job 17:16). The meaning of the noun שְָאֹל is comprehensive and denotes the place of death. Since the vocable characterizes the definitive state or the place of no return (cf. Akk: erṣet or cuneiform: šiala[kī]) or the permanent dwelling place of the dead (cf. Gen 3:19; Ps 139:15), the noun might be understood as a permanent closed place (i.e., capsule) of death. The word שְָאֹל in biblical wisdom literature is metaphorically related to the sea as immeasurable, unexplored, unlimited in depth and unreachable in horizon (cf. Ps 139:7; Amos 9:3), and in Prov 30:16 also highlights the inevitability of death (cf. Prov 27:20; Isa 5:14).

Thus, the “Leech” is the personification of a loathsome person, while “Shéol” is the embodiment of a loathsome place. The very rare and strong conjunctive accent Galgal, which can also stand for a colon in the Masoretic interpunction, appears in conjunction with the following word marked by the Zarqā on שְָאֹל and serves as a construct chain of

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348 The LXX translates the Hebrew noun שְָאֹל as ἀδής (“the place of departed spirits” or “the place of death,” cf. LSJ, 21). The Vg translates the Hebrew lexeme in a similar way, reading it as infernus (“the lower world” or “hell”). The Syr, as well as the Aramaic שָׁאֹל (“the underworld”), has the same lexeme כֶּלֶשׁ (“the underworld”) as the Hebrew. Stuart (p. 413) and Bridges (An Exposition, 442) see a synonym for the “grave” here. Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59) translates the Hebrew noun as “Das Schattenreich” (“the realm of shadows”). Similarly Doedelrlein (Sprüche, 190, as well Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 360; De Wette, 394; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Pföger, Sprüche, 353; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1255; Saebö, Sprüche, 367) sees here “Das Totenreich” (“the realm of death [Sheol]”). Ewald (p. 257) is more precise and translates the term as “Die Hölle” (“hell”). Frankenberg (Sprüche, 162) translates it with the Greek word “Der Hades,” while Gemser (Sprüche, 80, as well as Ringgren and Zimerli, Sprüche, 116; Schneider, Sprüche, 162), translates as “Untervelt” (“underworld”). McKane (Proverbs, 650, as well as Dahood, Proverbs, 59; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323) translate the Hebrew word “Sheol.”

349 Cf. Paul, Amos, 277 n. 42.


351 Cf. Dahood, Psalms I, 58.

The wāw does not look like an explicative wāw here (Dahood, Proverbs, 59), nor is it appositional or emphatic, but rather alternative (cf. “whether man or woman” in 1 Sam 27:9). The strong noun yāẓera is a derivative of the durative verb yāẓer, which means “keep close,” “hold back” or “shut up.” The noun is bipolar here because it

353 The LXX reads here καὶ ἕρως γυναικός, which according to the Codex Alexandrinus would be parallel to ὕδατος καὶ ὕδωρ (“waterly water”), the reduplication of the Hebrew מים (“water”) as an euphemism for a woman’s desire and in parallelism with the following contextual material (cf. Jäger, 219; LSJ, 695). The Vg, under the influence of LXX’s ἕρως, renders the words yāẓera as the construction vulvae—“of vulva” and reads et os vulvae—and mouth of vulve” (cf. BHQ, 56*)). The Syr rightly understands the Hebrew lexemes and opens here the dependent sentence with the particle wāw עצר רחם as its genitive, reads עציור רحما (“and the congestion of the womb of the earth”). Hodgson (p. 139) translates the noun yāẓera as the adjective voracious.” D. Winton Thomas (“Textual and Philological Notes on Some Passages in the Book of Proverbs,” in Wisdom in Ancient Israel and in the Ancient Near East [VTSup 3; Leiden: Brill, 1955] 280–92, here 290) finds in the Hebrew yāẓera the Arabic noun جديرة (“greediness”) and Eduard W. Lane (An Arabic-English Lexicon [Vol 1; London–Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1863] 2266) links the Hebrew yāẓera with Arabic verb جديرة (“to be ample,” “to be broad”), which Dahood (Proverbs, 59) utilizes in his translation, reading “Sheol who is broad bosom.”

354 The LXX inserts here an additional noun, τάρταρος (“the dark abyss”), which is a synonym of the preceding noun ᾅδης. The purpose of the LXX’s reduplication of the subject ᾅδης and τάρταρος is, on the one hand, to establish the parallelism between the “place of the dead” and the “lust of a woman” and on the other hand between the “place of the dead” and “unsatisfied soil.” Hodgson (p. 138), based on Lev 2:18 and Deut 14:17, sees in the noun ᾅδης a “bird of prey” and thus a “gier-eagle” (Egyptian vulture) or “pelican.” In the same manner, Thomas (“Textual,” 290) interprets the word ᾅδης as a “vulture” and reads v. 16a as “the greediness of the vulture.” Modern scholars see the genitive construction in the lexeme yāẓera. Thus, Müntinge (Die Sprüche, 59) omits the conjunction here and translates “und unfruchtbare Frau” (“a barren woman”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 190, so too Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Schneider, Sprüche, 162; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 116; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1255) in his translation “die unfruchtbare Mutter[schoß]” (“the barren [womb of] mother”) forms a contradictio in adiecto between the term “barren” and “mother,” which Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 360, as well as De Wette, 394; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 868; Sæbø, Sprüche, 369; ) reads as a terminus technicus of רחם ו.Concurrently—“die Unfruchtbare” (“the barrenness”). Ewald (p. 257) descriptively translates “und Unfruchbarkeit des Leibes” (“and sterility of the body”). Frankenberg (Sprüche, 162; Oesterley, Proverbs, 275; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Garrett, Proverbs, 239; Whybray, 414; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 605; Clifford, Proverbs, 236; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323) specifies Ziegler’s and Ewald’s rendering with “unfruchtbare Frauenschoß” or ventre sterile, or “infertile woman’s womb,” which Plöger (Sprüche, 353 as well as Meinhold, Sprüche, 504) render as verschlossener Mutterleib (“the closed womb”).


357 BDB, 783.
concerns the permanency where human life ends and the temporality where human life begins. In this regard, the noun can mean a “capsule,” so that צֶּר שְאוֹל would mean “the capsule of death,” while צֶּר רָחַם would refer to “the capsule of life,” because the noun, although having such variations in the MT as צֶּר (Gen 29:31; 30:22; 49:25; 1 Sam 1:5,6) or צֶּר (Pss 22:11; 58:4; Jer 20:17) and צֶּר (Prov 30:16; Isa 46:3; Ezek 20:26), regularly signifies not a woman’s but a “mother’s womb,” which metaphorically symbolizes the wellspring of human life. The translation of the first part of the sentence would be “whether capsule of death or capsule of life.”

The influence of the alternative wāw also extends to the following words. Here, the noun צֶּר is not a general term for the earth or soil, since it is specified by its predicate צֶּר שָׂבְעָה in the Qal perfect of שׂבע (“be satisfied”) and the object צֶּר מַיִּם (“water”). Because the Bible refers to such terms as oases (cf. Exod 15:27), wetlands, marshes and ponds with the terms אַגְמֵי מַיִּם, בִּצָה, גֶּבֶא (cf. Isa 14:23; 85:1; Müntinghe, Die Sprüche, 59; Doederlein, Sprüche, 190; Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 360; De Wette, 394; Ewald, 258; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 162; Toy, Commentary, 529; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Garrett, Proverbs, 239; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 116; Schneider, Sprüche, 162; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Whybray, 414; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1255; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Alonso Schökel and Vilches Lindez, I proverbi, 604; Clifford, Proverbs, 263; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 868; Sæbø, Sprüche, 367; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599.

358 The LXX follows the Hebrew sentence here and reads γῆ οὐκ ἐμπιπλαμένη υδάτος (“the earth not filled with water”). In the same way, the Vg reads terra quae non satiatur aqua. The Syr uses the verb सܢܬ (“be sated”) which corresponds to the Hebrew צֶּר שָׂבְעָה and reads סִגָה (“and the soil not sated with the water”), while the Targum reduplicates the noun צֶּר שָׂבְעָה, thus, emphasizing the insatiability of the earth and of the womb, and approximating the Syr. אַגְמֵי מַיִּם, reads אַגְמֵי צֶּר (“and closed wombs not satisfied with the waters”). Jäger (p. 219) maintains that “water” here is a euphemism for woman’s sexual desire. Dahood’s (Proverbs, 59) translation reads “the earth never sated with water,” so too Lelièvre and Maillot’s (Commentaire 19–31, 323): “La terre jamais gorgée d’eau” (“the earth never waterlogged”). However, Dahood’s and Lelièvre and Maillot’s translations seem incorrect, because there is also earth/soil sated with the water (marshes, ponds) as well as earth/soil that is unsated with water (deserts).

359 Cf. Hodgson, 85; Müntinghe, Die Sprüche, 59; Doederlein, Sprüche, 190; Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 360; De Wette, 394; Ewald, 258; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 162; Toy, Commentary, 529; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Garrett, Proverbs, 239; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 116; Schneider, Sprüche, 162; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Whybray, 414; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1255; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Alonso Schökel and Vilches Lindez, I proverbi, 604; Clifford, Proverbs, 263; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 868; Sæbø, Sprüche, 367; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599.

360 Oesterley (Proverbs, 276) suggests reading “the land without water” and Scott (Proverbs, 179) “a land short of water.”
42:15; Job 8:11; Ezek 47:11) and the watered banks of the Euphrates, Tigris, Nile or Jordan denoted by the term גִּדְיָה (cf. Jos 3:15; 4:18; 1 Chr 12:16; Prov 8:29), the general concept of the “thirsty earth” seems implausible (cf. Murphy, 233; Fox, 869). The durable elements of earth, water and fire strongly suggest extreme conditions of nature. The disjunctive ָָּתְנָה closes the sentence, marking the principal division of the first half of the verse that should be read as “whether earth without water.”

A merism of water is מש (“fire”) with an alternative wāw, which with the predicate המִּגְּדָּל and object הָיוֹן recalls the predicate and objects of v. 15. Such a translation by modern scholars as “and the fire, that says not sufficient/enough” is inadequate, for fire may be controlled but also uncontrolled. Here, the author does not emphasize the consuming power of fire but primarily its extreme uncontrolled character. The רֵּבְּיָה meaning “vulture” is a penultimate disjunctive accent with the מָרֵּא and the סִילָּע, marking the conclusion of the verse, which should be read as “or fire without control.”

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361 Hodgson’s (85) and Thomas’ (“Textual,” 290) translation “greediness of a vulture” is difficult to accept because of its lack of parallelism with the other subject in the verse but their idea of something aggressive and demanding as the referent of the noun מָרֵּא seems acceptable.

362 The LXX reduplicates the Hebrew noun בּוֹעֵד and reads כְּנַיְמַלְכְּדָּרֵא יִבְּרִי—“and the water and fire, which never would say enough.” The Vulgate follows the Hebrew syntax as ignis vero numquam dicit sufficit—“the fire, which, in reality, never says enough.” Also the Syriac follows the Hebrew syntax here and reads ܘܢܘܪܐ ܠܐ ܐܡܪܐ ܟܕܘ—“and the fire, which does not say enough.” The Targum follows the Syriac and reads ܘܢܘܪܐ ܠܐ ܪܡܐ—“and the fire, which does not say: ‘it’s enough!’” The majority of modern translations follow the matrix of the Vulgate translation.

363 Cf. Müntinghe, Die Sprüche, 59; Doedelein, Sprüche, 190; Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 360; De Wette, 394; Ewald, 258; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 162; Toy, Commentary, 529; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Garrett, Proverbs, 239; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 116; Schneider, Sprüche, 162; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Whybrey, 414; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1255; Ploger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Alonso Schökel and Vilches Lindez, I proverbi, 604; Clifford, Proverbs, 263; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 868; Sæbø, Sprüche, 367; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599.
The feminine noun עֵַ֤יִּן here does not have a material referent but rather a figurative one, such as “look” (1 Sam 18:9); “spring” (Deut 33:28; 2 Sam 17:17) and “mental and spiritual” faculties (Gen 3:5, 7; Isa 42:7; Prov 28:27), which in Prov 30:17 can be understood as referring to a human “personality.” The eye, as the unique organ of vision, refers to a basic sense besides those of smell, touch and hearing. The symbolic usage of the noun עַיִּן is a metalepsis of the subject דוֹר in vv. 11–14, narrowing the term “generation” to a “personality” whose behavior as mentioned in vv. 11–14 is unacceptable in Israelite religious society. The verb in the Qal imperfect expresses repeated practice and habit here. The drastic warning against mocking one’s aged parents in Prov 30:17 is related to the commandment concerning parents in Ex. 20:12. In fact, the verb לְעַג (“to mock”) is the opposite of the verb כָּבֵד (“to honor”) or שמע (“to listen to,” cf. Prov 23:22) and could be interpreted as the dishonoring of God, his created world and his order in the world.

364 The LXX reads two accusatives (“eye that is mocking”) here with the genitive (“father”) as a personification of the son: ὀφθαλμὸν καταγελῶντα πατρὸς—“the eye mocking the father.” The Vulgate does the same: oculum qui subsannat patrem—“the eye mocking the father.” The Syriac specifies the object and reads as follows: עין ד manhã ל אב—“the eye that derides the father.” Doederlein (Sprüche, 190, as well as Scott, Proverbs, 179) introduces an independent proverb here with the possessive pronoun: “wer seinen Vater verächtlich”—“one who scorns his father.” Similarly, Alonso Schökel and Vilches Lindez (I proverbi, 606) read “Chi si fa beffe di suo padre”—“Anyone who makes fun of his father,” while Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 323) have “L’oeil de celui qui raille son père”—“the eye that mocks his father.” Hodgson (p. 86) and Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 361, as well as De Wette, 394; Frankenberge, Sprüche, 162; Toy, Commentary, 529; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Garrett, Proverbs, 239; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 116; Schneider, Sprüche, 162; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Whybray, 414; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1256; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 868; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599) translates the sentence literally as “Ein Auge das des Vaters spottet”—“the eye that scorns the father.”

365 GKC, § 107e–g.

366 K. Barth, “לעג,” TDOT 8:10; Gesenius 3:612.
The direct object with the preposition לְ regularly follows the verb שעג (cf. 2 Kgs 19:21; Neh 2:19; Job 22:19; Pss 2:4; 22:28; 59:9; 80:7), while the object אב with the preposition לְ (לְאָב) has an adoptive connotation—“take someone (God) as a father” (cf. Gen 17:4; 45:8; Judg 17:10; 18:19; 2 Sam 7:14; 1 Chr 17:13; 22:10; 28:6; Isa 22:21; Jer 31:9) and could refer not only to respect for the biological father (cf. Isa 45:10; Ezek 44:25) but also for the “elderly” (cf. Teaching of Amenemope) or “wise” (cf. Sir 31:22).

The conjunctive accent Mḥuppāḥh precedes the following word with the Paseq on עֵַ֤יִּן׀, which points to the similarity of content between עֵַ֤יִּן׀ and תִִּֽלְעַֻ֣ג. The reinforcement is also stressed via the rare and strong conjunctive accent Zarqâ on לְאָב, which should be read in conjunction with the following word marked by a Galgal.

The verb תָב֪וּז לִִּֽיקֲהַַ֫ת־אֵ֥ם (“to despise”) with the consecutive wāw is here in the Qal imperfect of

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368 ANET 424.
370 GKC, §15f, n. 2.
371 The LXX adds the construct γῆρας μητρός (“the old mother”) understanding the Hebrew text as זָקַּהְתּ אֵ֣ם (“old mother,” cf. Jäger, p. 219) and reads καὶ ἀτιμάζοντα γῆρας μητρός (“and despises the old age of the mother”). The Vg probably reads here יָלַדְתּ אֵ֣ם as the Qal infinitive derivative of the verb יָלַד (“become mother”) and translates et qui despicit partum matris suae (“and who despises his mother who bore him”). The Syr follows the LXX here, reading ﻭﺷـّيّطأ ﺖـّـvenience ﻣـّـ ﻋـّـر ﺖـّـ ﻋـّـر ("and despises the old age of his mother") The Tg follows the Syr in reading ﻭﺷـّيّطأ ﺖـّـvenience ﻣـّـ ﻋـّـر ﺖـّـ ﻋـّـر ("and despises the old age of his mother"). Gemser (Sprüche, 80) suggests here “die ungewöhnliche Vokalisation wohl des Anklangs an יִּקְר֥וּהָ wegen” (“the unusual vocalization probably because of the word-play with יִּקְר֥וּהָ” and, under the influence of the Ethiopic lehqa ("to become old") suggests לאוּ תָב֪וּז לִִּֽיקֲהַַ֫ת־אֵ֥ם read as לִִּֽיקֲהַת־אֵם ("the obedience of the mother") reading qôp without dages, suggesting that the LXX’s reading coresponds to the Heebrew זָקַּהְתּ אֵ֣ם —“the mother in her old age,” which is not case here.
custom or habit (cf. לָעֵג above). The verb usually goes with the preposition ב and can denote a person (cf. Prov 6:30; 11:12; 14:21; Song 8:1, 7; Isa 37:22) or a quality of a person such as wisdom (cf. Prov 1:7; 23:9) or eloquence (cf. Prov 13:13). The noun אֵם (“mother”) in the absolute state does not go here with the preposition ב as the direct object, i.e., אֵםלְ (cf. 1 Kgs 2:19), but with the construct chain of words, אֵם and יְקָהָה. The construct feminine noun ending ב with the Maqqēp characterizes the objective genitive (cf. the subjective genitive with the same noun in Gen 49:10). “obedience of the mother,” which could be understood here as the term “obedient mother,” where in the construct chain the nomen regens modifies the nomen rectum. In addition, the obedience of a son is first and foremost linked to his father (Exod 20:12; Lev 19:32; Prov 4:4; Sir 7:28) and, thus, there would be a discrepancy in the statement that the son is only mocking the father but disobeys the mother. Much more convincing is the rendering “eye (son) mocks his father and despises the obedient mother” or “despises the mother because of her obedience or subservience to the husband” (cf. Num 5:27; 30:14). The repetition of the theme from v. 11f. suggests a re-elaboration of vv. 11–14 here. Thus, the following conclusion in v. 17aγ and 17aδ presupposes all the wickedness of the “generation” mentioned in the previous vv. 11–14 (cf. the Aramaic part of Ezra 4:10, 17), and includes not only a sin against the parents (v. 11) but also hypocrisy (v. 12), scorn

372 Gustav Boström, in Proverbiastudien, 126–27 compares Prov 20:20 and 30:17 in the light of parallelisms found in the Code of Hammurabi and the Aramaic Words of Aḥikar and translates Prov 20:20 as “Wer seinen Vater und seine Mutter verflucht das Licht seines Auges (Pupille) soll im Dunkel verlöschen” (“Who curses his father and his mother, extinguishes the light of his eye (pupil).”

373 BDB, 429.
and arrogance (v. 13) and disdain and injustice (v. 14). The Galgal shows a close relationship with the preceding word, while the ʿōlē wēyōrēd extends the clause toward the next syntactical element. The translation of the first part of v. 17 would be “(Thus) one eye, which mocks the father and despises the obedient mother etc.” (i.e., generation (eye) considered as “pure eyes,” while having not washed its (one’s) filth. Generation: look at those eyes, how haughty they are, while blinking (with) its eyelids. Generation with its teeth like swords, its molars like knives to consume (bring to nothingness) the unprotected of the land or the needy [for God] of humanity).

After two imperfects of custom or habit 헨 quân and 흘버 in v. 17α-β, a similar combination of two imperfects of action appears here. The verb יִקְר֥וּהָ ע רְבֵי־נֵַ֑חַל ("may the ravens from the valley cut him off," cf. Wallace, Greek Grammar, 482). The Vg follows the Hebrew syntax, reading effodiant corvi de torrentibus ("let the wadi ravens pluck it out"). The Syr does the same: نحف فين حرير في نحل ("let the wadi ravens pluck out it"). The Tg follows the Syr in reading "let the wadi ravens pluck out it"). Hodgson (p. 86) reads the predicate here "the crows of the valley shall pick out." The same is done by Doederlein (Sprüche, 191, as well as Garrett, Proverbs, 239; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Wbyhray, 414; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Alonso Schökel and Vilches Lindez, I proverbi, 607; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323; Clifford, Proverbs, 264) where he reads "warden die Waldraben aushacken" ("the forest-ravens will gouge out"). By contrast, Müntinge (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 361; De Wette, 394; Toy, Commentary, 529; Scott, Proverbs, 179; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Oesterley, Proverbs, 276; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 116; Schneider, Sprüche, 162; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1256; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 868; Sæbo, Sprüche, 368; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599) introduces a dependent clause here "Das werden die Raben in Thälern einst auspiken" ("that the ravens in the wadi will someday gouge this out"). Similarly, Frankenberg (Sprüche, 162) reads "das hacken die Raben am Bache aus" ("that the ravens will gouge this out at the brook"); Meinhold (Sprüche, 504) has "Bachraben" ("the brook’s ravens").

374 See Chapter Four of this dissertation.
375 The LXX’s aorist voluntative ἐκκόψαι expresses an obtainable past wish of the constructive ἐκκόψαν αὐτὸν κόρακες ἐκ τῶν φαράγγων ("may the ravens from the valley cut him off," cf. Wallace, Greek Grammar, 482). The Vg follows the Hebrew syntax, reading effodiant corvi de torrentibus ("let the wadi ravens pluck it out"). The Syr does the same: نحف فين حرير في نحل ("let the wadi ravens pluck out it"). Hodgson (p. 86) reads the predicate here "the crows of the valley shall pick out." The same is done by Doederlein (Sprüche, 191, as well as Garrett, Proverbs, 239; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Wbyhray, 414; Plöger, Sprüche, 352; Alonso Schökel and Vilches Lindez, I proverbi, 607; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323; Clifford, Proverbs, 264) where he reads "warden die Waldraben aushacken" ("the forest-ravens will gouge out"). By contrast, Müntinge (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 361; De Wette, 394; Toy, Commentary, 529; Scott, Proverbs, 179; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Oesterley, Proverbs, 276; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 116; Schneider, Sprüche, 162; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1256; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 868; Sæbo, Sprüche, 368; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599) introduces a dependent clause here "Das werden die Raben in Thälern einst auspiken" ("that the ravens in the wadi will someday gouge this out"). Similarly, Frankenberg (Sprüche, 162) reads "das hacken die Raben am Bache aus" ("that the ravens will gouge this out at the brook"); Meinhold (Sprüche, 504) has "Bachraben" ("the brook’s ravens").
376 GKC, §107f.
377 Cf. BDB, 669; Gesenius, 4:846.
emphatic construction reflects a strong desire. The construct chain with the *Maqqēp* consists of two nouns. The noun עֵרֶב pertains to a bird of prey or raptor, among which the Semitic languages do not distinguish among raven, crow or eagle.\(^{378}\) The noun לַחֲמָן denotes the watery area of a brook or stream, which lacks the abundance of water of a נְחָר ("river")\(^{379}\) but sporadically, during the rainy season floods the depressions of a valley or wadi (cf. Deut 9:21; Job 6:15–17).\(^{380}\) This water source regularly manifests itself in the springtime when birds nest and the valley becomes a habitat for the food chain: worms-insects-birds. One thing is certain here: the noun לַחֲמָן refers more to the habitat of a leech than to that of raptors or vultures. Raptors (male and female) nest in the trees or cliffs close to a source of food for their chicks.\(^{381}\) The image of the raptors that feed their chicks with water creatures, such as the leech, corresponds to the execution of the wicked.\(^{382}\) Since the term “Bachraben” ("brook’s ravens," cf. Meinhold, *Die Sprüche*, 504) as well as “vultures of the valley” (cf. Murphy, *Proverbs*, 232) does not make any sense in Biblical Hebrew terminology, the term עֵרֶב נַחַל should be closely associated with the following בְּנֵי נִָֽשֶּר ("raptor’s chicks") and, thus, refer not to the *ravens of the valley* but to the “nesting raptors,” who grab their prey and bring it to their chicks (cf. Ps 104:10–12. 17; Jer 48:28; Ezek 31:6).


The consecutive wāw concludes the clause with the most frequently used verb in Proverbs 30 so far: אכל (“to eat,” and “to consume”) The imperfect of the action with the suff. 3 fs referring to the object “eye” narrows and specifies the context. The subject that performs the action is the noun נשר, which in the Hebrew designates an “eagle” but in the construct chain בני נשר, where the construct state is pleonastic (cf. בני יعقوב; בני אשבו) can also represent a collective noun referring to all “vultures” swift to devour (cf. Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323). In any case, the correct reading depends on the context. If there are “nesting raptors,” then there are also their chicks. The construct בני נשר can mark the gluttony of a chick that is big at birth. In addition, both the nouns ערב and נשר invoke the curse or the extermination of the wicked and the separation of בני נשר (“the raptor’s chicks”) from בני ישראל (“the sons of Israel,” cf. Gen 46:8) as the epitome of all those who observe God’s commandments (cf. Joshua 10; 1 Sam 7:8;
Ps 22:24; 68:27; Jer 50:4; Hos 3:5). The copulative מִֵֽיָּאֵּאֶּֽרֶּשֶּׁר and מֵֵֶּרֶּשֶּׁר in the construction show a conjunctive connection with the following construction כִּפְרָאֶֽשֶׁר, which should be read as “and may the raptor’s chicks eat it.” While the Petuhah opens a new segment, v. 17 should be read as follows: “The eye that mocks the father and despises the obedient mother (etc.), the nesting raptors may grab and the raptor’s chicks may eat it.

The chiastic formula A ≤ B used once by the author opens a series of examples in the subsequent v. 19. The masculine gender of the setting number “three,” with the emphatic pronoun (cf. v. 15) and the Niph'al perfect of פָּלַא ("be surpassing," “be hard,” “difficult,” “unusual,” “unrelated”) forms the clause. The verb, with its emotionally expressive characteristics and the addition of the preposition מִּן of comparison (cf. Gen 3:1; Judg 14:18; Est 6:6), expresses an action that “the subject allows to happen to himself or even to have an effect upon itself” (Niph'al tolerativum). Two Minaḥs, one on פָּלַא and the other on מִּנְיָא, signify the close relation with the following personal pronoun, מִּנְיָא, which, with the disjunctive accent athnāh, concludes the first half of the verse: “Three things are very unusual

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386 The LXX opens the new segment with the neuter τρία δέ ἐστιν ἀδύνατα μοι νοῆσαι (“thus, there are three things incapable of being known to me”). The Vg simplifies the clause in reading in tria sunt difficilia mihi (“three things are difficult for me”). The Syr reads the clause in the feminine: حَلَّلَتُ كَتَبَ حَمْطَةُ صَدْرُ (“there are three characters that are hidden to me”). The Tg follows the Hebrew pattern, reading תלתא אינון דגניו מיני (“three things are hidden to me”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59) reads here “Drei Dinge kann ich nicht verstehen” (“three things I cannot understand”) By contrast, Hodgson (p. 86, as well as Doederlein, Sprüche, 190) has “three things there are, which to me are incomprehensible.” Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 361, as well as Ewald, 258) offers another solution, reading “Drei Dinge sind für mich zu wunderbar” (“three things are too wonderful for me”), while De Wette (p. 394) has “diese Drei Dinge sind unbegreiflich” (“these three things are incomprehensible”), while Frankenberg (Sprüche, 162) reads “Drei Dinge sind mir zu hoch” (“three things are too high for me”).

387 GKC, §133a-e.

388 GKC, §51,2c.
to me.”

389 The LXX introduces the number four for the first time here, while negating the verb καὶ τὸ τέταρτον οὐκ ἐπιγινώσκω (“and four I do not know completely”). The Vg does not even read the second verb in negation but et quartum penitus ignoro (“and four I barely know”). The Syr follows the Hebrew lexicography where it readsuseppe, 276; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 870; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599) offers a reading that is widely accepted by scholars: “wunderbar… nicht begreife” (“wonderous… I do not understand”). Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 606) have “tre cose che superano e quarta che non comprendo” (“three things that surpass and a fourth that I do not understand,” while Scott (Proverbs, 179) see here “astonishment” over three things and four things that are beyond human comprehension.

390 Cf. HALAT, 100.
The combination of the cardinal numbers “three encapsulated in four” in the phrase relates four definite characters (scavenger, serpent, ship and rake/sinner) to four extraordinary places (sky, rock, sea and girl’s desirable attraction), which, to be understood, emphasizes not ignorance but alienation from the author, where four unsuitable characters vanish, being consumed by natural elements and human emotions. The Minaḥ on the negation לֹֻ֣א represents a second conjunctive accent, while the Sillūq on יְדַעְתִִּֽֽים is the last tone-syllable of the verse: “Three things are very unusual to me, encapsulated in four that are alien to me.”

The noun דֶּרֶּ֤רֶּ֙ is repetitive here, like the stylistic metalepsis of the noun דֶּרֶּ֤רֶּ ("generation") in vv. 11–14 and עַיִּן ("eye") in v. 17. Representing the “way” of the scavenger, serpent, ship and rake/sinner, the noun דֶּרֶּ, together with the terminative preposition ב, forms a chain of successive clauses advancing the assertive action of

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393 The LXX also uses the same noun ἄετος ("eagle") in v. 17 and 19 and translates ίχνη ἄετοῦ πετομένου “footprint of the flying eagle.” The Vg is closer to the Hebrew, reading viam aquilae in caelo (“way of the eagle in the sky”). It seems that the Syr has understood the Hebrew noun דֶּרֶּ as “way of life,” and reads the clause in following manner אָוָּרָחָה דַּנְשַרָה בֶּשַׁמִּיָּא ("the behavior of the eagle in the sky"). The Tg does the same: אָוָּרָחָה דַּנְשַרָה בֶּשַׁמִּיָּא ("the behavior of the eagle in the sky"). Müntinge (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as Frankenberg, *Sprüche*, 163; Gemser, *Sprüche*, 80; Oesterley, *Proverbs*, 277; Lelièvre and Maillot, *Commentaire 19–31*, 323; Fox, *Proverbs 10–31*, 870; Sæbø, *Sprüche*, 368) instead of the noun "sky" reads “air:” “Den Weg des Adlers durch die Luft [am Himmel]” (“the way of an eagle through the air [in the sky]”), while Hodgson (p. 86, as well as Delitzsch, *Commentary*, 295) reads the noun תָּמִיָּא in the plural: “The way of an eagle through the skies.” Doederlein (Sprüche, 191) reads the clause without a subject: “des Adlers zum Himmel” (“[the way/thing of] the eagle toward the sky”). Toy (Commentary, 530) simply translates “The way of the vulture in the air.”
the active subjects (scavenger, serpent, ship and rake/sinner) toward their passive objects (sky, rock, sea and girl’s attraction). Thus, the “way” of life of active and aggressive phenomena such as the scavenger, serpent, ship and rake/sinner with their passive objects such as the sky, rock, sea and girl’s attraction is in reality the way of their consumption by elements and emotions.

The noun נֶּשֶּר has already occurred in v. 17, but here the presence of the article and the direction (the sky) shows not only the natural but also the symbolic way of נֶּשֶּר. The noun נֶּשֶּר, according to Mic 1:16, refers to a big impure flying scavenger; with the article ה it is also found in Lev 11:13; Deut 14:12; Ps 103:5; Isa 40:31; Jer 48:40; Lam 4:19; Ezek 17:3; Hos 8:1; Obad 1:4; Mic 1:16. In Leviticus and Deuteronomy, נֶּשֶּר is an abomination among the fowls that include the strong flying scavenger, in Jer 49:16; Lam 4:19; Ezek 17:3; Hos 8:1 it is a fearless enemy, while in Ps 103:5 and Isa 40:31 the description presents its beauty, majesty and wondrousness and, thus, alludes to the eagle, which is also regarded by other cultures as “the king of the fliers” that symbolizes strength, courage, farsightedness and immortality. The scavenger’s action is contrary to that of the immense passive power of נֶּשֶּר (“the sky”), constructed with the terminative preposition ב, with which the active subject confronts the element (cf. Exod 20:10; Est 1:2;

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394 The preposition ב of agent usually follows the passive construction, which is in v. 19 represented by the objects sky, rock, sea and girl’s attraction. Cf. Williams’ Hebrew Syntax, §245.

395 It is difficult to accept Böck’s theory (“Proverbs 30:18-19,” 268–70) of the eagle and sky as analogous to a groom and bride.

The author of Proverbs 30 contrasts the negative connotation of the scavenger (cf. 1 Sam 17:44; Ps 79:2) with the powerful fluid element. The result is that the scavenger vanishes into the immense space of the air. The vanishing of the scavenger alludes to its being consumed. The noun נָחָשׁ ("snake," "serpent") in the MT is always without an article. The means by which the serpent is consumed is צָעְר (rock), which is also used without the article here. The meaning of the noun נָחָשׁ is general here and marks the serpent in its negative contextual biblical occurrence (cf. Ps 74:13; Job 15:25; Is 27:1; Am 9:3), which, with the preposition עַל ("on" or "facing...") and the object of the termination צָעְר ("rock," cf. 2 Sam 21:10) in the natural world, represents the earthly solid and massive state. The noun צָעְר in a metaphorical sense represents an

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397 Cf. LaSor, Handbook, §36.4111.
398 The LXX sees the Hebrew noun נָחָשׁ as a metalepsis while placing it only twice in v. 19 in the dependent clause: καὶ ὁδὸς ὀφεῖς ἐπὶ πέτρας ("and the way of the serpent on the rock"). The Vg follows the Hebrew lexical pattern, reading viam colubri super petram ("way of the serpent upon the rock"). The Syr, following the LXX, introduces a consecutive wāw in the following sentences: وَاورِحْيَة دَحْوَيَة عَلِيّ شَوَا ("and the behavior of the serpent on the rock"). The Tg follows the Syr pattern, reading ואורחיה דחק על שועא ("and the behavior of the serpent on the rock"). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as Hogson, 86; Delitzsch, Commentary, 295: Frankenberg, Sprüche, 163; Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Oesterley, Proverbs, 277; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 607; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Fox, Proverbs 10–31; 870; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) has here "den Schlangen Weg über (auf dem) Felsen" ("the way of a serpent on the rock"). Doederlein (Sprüche, 191, as well as Ziegler, Übersetzung, 361; De Wette, 394; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Toy, Commentary, 530; Schneider, Sprüche, 162; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323) has here "der Schlange Gang auf dem Felsen" ("the serpent's way on the rock"). By contrast, Ewald (p. 258 cf. Scott, Proverbs, 179) renders an interrogative clause: "wie Schlange auf den Felsen kommt?" ("how does the serpent come onto the rock?").
399 Cf. BDB, 252; Gesenius, 4:807.
immense symbol of protection. The author of Proverbs 30 contrasts the serpent in negative perspective with the static position of the protective rock in a positive perspective. The contrast of the unclean serpent and the immense protective rock appears paradoxical. How can the rock, which also represents God’s protection (cf. Deut 32:15; 1 Sam 2:2; 2 Sam 22:47; Pss 18:32; 62:8), support the “enemy” or even “evil” (cf. Pss. 58:5; 140:4; Qoh 10:8; Isa 14:29)?

The answer lies in vanishing and being consumed: once the serpent reaches the massive and immense rock, it vanishes into its immensity. The מְרֵאָה on כיְדֶר indicates the close relationship with the preceding זקר, while the disjunctive יֵ֔לֶךְ וַיֹּ֖רֶד on עֲלוֹ֣י צֻר concludes the second minor sentence, which should be read as “the way (of the consumption) of the serpent on (by) the rock.”

The direct object אֲנִֽיָּה (cf. Gen 49:13; Ezek 27:9) generally refers to a large galley ship. In the MT, a ship is usually linked to unfriendly foreign powers (cf. Deut

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401 The serpent’s ability to move on a rock is not as marked as that of lizards and spiders (cf. חַטְבָּה in Prov 30:28) and, thus, the reference to “legless reptile that slithers along the ground without leaving a trace” (Forti, Animal Imagery, 126) seems to misunderstand the context.

402 Here again, the LXX changes ὁδὸς (“way”) into τρίβους (“course,” “direction”) and reads καὶ τρίβους νῆος ποντοπορούσης (“and the direction of the sailing ship”). The Vg follows the Hebrew syntax: viam navis in medio mari (“the way of the ship in the middle of the sea”). The Syr reads וֹאָרָךְ הַדֵּלֶךְ דַלֶּךְ ("and the way of the ship in the middle of the sea"). The Tg does the same: אֲרוֹרֵאָה דַלְלֶה דַלְלֶה ("and the way of the ship in the middle of the sea"). Müntinghe’s translation (Die Sprüche, 59; as well as Frankenberg, Sprüche, 163) does not follow the Hebrew emphatic object “the heart of the sea” but simply “den Weg der Schiffe in der See” (“the way of the ship in the sea”), while Hodgson (p. 85, as well as De Wette, 349; Schneider, Sprüche, 162; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 870) emphatically reads the locative בְִלֶב־יָם: “The way of the ship through the heart of the sea,” which Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 361, as well as Gemser, Sprüche, 80; Oesterley, Proverbs, 277; Toy, Commentary, 530; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) describes as the “hohen See oder schlecht-weg auf der See” (“open sea or bad-way on the sea”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 191, as well as Baruçq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 607) continues with the nominal clause in v. 19, while reading “des Schiffes Gang auf dem Meer” (“a ship’s way on the sea”), and Ewald (p. 258; cf. Scott, Proverbs, 179) with the interrogative clause “wie Schiff ins Herz des Meeres kommt?” (“how does the ship come into the heart of the sea?”).

28:68; Num 24:24; Dan 11:30; Ps 104:28); the hostile Phoenician merchant trade (cf. Isaiah 23; Ezek 27:4–36; Prov 31:14) transmitting wealth, arrogance and false posturing (cf. Wis 5:7–11). A biblical equivalent of פַּרְנָסָה to the Akkadian metaphor of a pregnant woman is doubtful. Usually, the size of an ancient ship was counted “by citing the numbers of holes to a side.” There were four-oared to twenty-oared ships with ten to fifty oarsmen whom every galley had to have available for sailing on the sea independently of the wind and sails. The construct chain בְּלֶּּבֶּ יָּם is strong here and clearly highlights the consumption of the subject by its terminative place as “vastness of the sea” (cf. Ps 46:3; 104:26; Wis 14:1–7). The conflict between the negative perspective of the ship in action and the passive liquid of the sea paradoxically turns into “the vanishing (or consumption) of the (active) ship into the vastness of the (passive) sea.” The copulative מִתֵּהֵג followed by the מֶרֶּכֶת shows a conjunctive connection with the following element of confrontation, which with the disjunctive ‘athanah denotes the principal division of the first half of the verse: “The way (of the consumption) of the ship into (by) the vastness of the sea.”


Casson, Ships and Seamanship, 158.

It seems that the LXX with its selection of the lexemes wants to link the second sentence καὶ ὁδὸς ὀφεὼς ἐπὶ πέτρας (“and the way of the serpent on the rock”) to the last clause in v. 19: καὶ ὁδὸς ἄνδρος (assumed ἀμαρτωλοῦ) ἐν νεότητι (“and the way of the man [sinner, ἄνωθεν, cf. Qoh 11:9] in [his] youth” [the LXX
figures in v. 19. The direct object בֵּטֵלֶם in the MT has various meanings, with the common denomination of “manhood.”\(^{410}\) The mighty man in Gen 10:8. 9, the soldier or warrior in Judg 5:30 or the roughneck in Prov 6:34; 28:21 (cf. Jer 30:6; 31:22; Hab 2:5) can denote a strong man, assertive man, aggressive man, a man without fear or without respect. Since the previous subjects (scavenger, serpent and ship) all had negative overtones, and since the instrument of the consummation of the is ("a girl"), while the appositional phrase in v. 20 refers to an adultress as the man’s way, the noun בֵּטֵלֶם is probably pejorative here, as well as in v. 1, with the meaning “sinful man” or “dude,” that in its emphatic meaning would denote a

The subjects preceding the rake can be characterized as predators that not only consume others but can also be consumed themselves. Thus, while the scavengers eat the serpent, the ship consumes men (oarsmen). The ship is characterized by its oarsmen and sailors, who move and maintain the ship. The sailor and oarsman who worked on a galley had to be גֶּבֶּר (“a strong man”). In this sense, the ship could denote the consuming predator of a strong man who worked on the ship. However, the noun גֶּבֶּר has its own consuming destination here, while the terminative preposition בְ has the function of place, the noun עַלְמָה characterizes a “young unmarried woman” (cf. Gen 24:43; Exod 2:8; Is 7:14) or “attractive woman,” “singer” or “dancer” (Pss 46:1; 68:26) or “girlfriend” (Song 1:3; 6:8).

Since all the objects in v. 19 so far are powerful, naturally unapproachable but permissive entities (sky, rock, sea), the terminative “by a girl” could be an unmarried woman who should keep her distance from a man but who, instead, accepts the man’s overtures toward her. The term עַלְמָה would, thus, be in correlation with הַמָּרְתָּא (“the virgin”), whom גֶּבֶּר אִּיש לֹא יְדָעָ (“the man did not touch,” cf. Gen 24:16; Exod 22:15; Deut 22:28). The noun גֶּבֶּר is also bivalent here. In the microstructure of the clause, the noun denotes a strong, healthy man as a potential sinner or the rake, who approaches a girl, his activity being completely absorbed by

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411 Clines (Job 1–20, p. 82) doubts that the noun has a special overtone of “strength” or “sinner;” rather it may allude everything that characterizes an adult man: strength, sexual maturity as well as sexual activity and propensity to sin. Cf. Rico, “L'énigme,” 272 n. 1.

412 Mediterranean people sometimes took oarsmen by force. The Croatian novelist Vladimir Nazor, in his capital work Veli Jože, described a young and extraordinarily strong oarsman from Motovun in Croatia who was taken by force to row in a Venetian galley on the Adriatic and Mediterranean: Veli Jože (Zagreb: Mladost, 1968).


the girl’s presence. Thus, the rake in his relationship with the girl is a metaphor for his consumption by his own desire and passion. In the macrostructure of the entire v. 19, the noun רֵֽבֶּֽר forms the sequel of the subjects toward their objects, which are divided into two narrative chains: the scavenger that consumes the serpent and the ship that consumes רֵֽבֶּֽר ("strong men"). The תָּרָֽה on רֵֽבֶּֽר shows a conjunctive accent with the following noun and the מִנָּֽה on רֵֽבֶּֽר marks the second conjunctive accent, while the סִילָֽע on רֵֽבֶּֽר shows the last tone-syllable of the verse, which should be read as follows: “The way (of the consumption) of the scavenger in (by) the sky; the way (of the consumption) of the serpent on (by) the rock; the way (of the consumption) of the ship in (by) the vastness of the sea, the way (of the consumption) of the rake by a girl.”

The adverb כֵּֽן introduces an adverbial declarative clause: “thus” or “so,” which

415 Müntinghe (Sprüche, 59, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 361; Oesterley, Proverbs, 277; Plöger, Sprüche, 353; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) reads the particle as the consequence of what precedes. Doederlein (Sprüche, 191, likewise Hodgson, 86 and Gemser, Sprüche, 80–81) does the same with “ebenso” (“likewise”), as well as Schneider (Sprüche, 162; cf. Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504) “so ist [auch]” (“so is also”) and Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 323) “de même!” (“the same!”) Gemser (Sprüche, 80–81, as well as Toy, Commentary, 531) understands v. 20 as a redactorial supplement to the final sentence of v. 19 and thus does not see it as a part of Proverbs 30, understanding it as an after interpretation of Prov 9:17. By contrast, Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 608) follow Scott (Proverbs, 179, as well as McKane, Proverbs, 658; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599), reading the adverb as the introduction to the following verse “Così si composta l’adultera” (“this is how the adulteress behaves”).

416 To synchronize v. 19 with v. 20 the LXX compares the way of a man with the way of a woman when it reads in v. 20 τοιαύτη ὁδὸς γυναικὸς μοιχαλίδος ("the same way is that of an adulterous woman"). The Vg in a similar manner reads talis est via mulieris adulterae ("such is the way of an adulteress"). The Syr follows the Hebrew חכַּנָּה, חָיָה, חָיָה כַּנָּה חָיָה ("thus behaves an adulterous woman"). The Tg follows the Syr, reading קַנָּה אֲדֹלֶּּתתיִּת עַל מֵרֵי ("thus is the behavior of an adulterous woman"). Müntinghe (Sprüche, 59, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 361; Delitzsch, Commentary, 295; Oesterley, Proverbs, 277; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) reads “So ist auch der Weg der Ehebrecherin” ("so is also the way of an adulterous woman"). Hodgson (86) and Doederlein (Sprüche, 191) read “Ebenso der Gang der Ehebrecherin” ("likewise the way of the adulteress"). Frankenberg (Sprüche, 163) has here “so ist die Handlungsweise des ehebrecherischen Weibes" ("thus is the way of acting of the adulterous woman"), while Schneider (Sprüche, 162) has “so ist (auch) der Weg einer Frau, die Ehebruch treibt” ("thus is [also] the way of a woman, who commits adultery"). Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire
with the subject רֶּד links to the main theme of the segment of vv. 18–20. Here, the negative character of the subject רֶּד also indicates the main feature of all the entities in the segment. Thus, the chiastic formula A ≤ B (v. 18) cannot be divided into two separate entities involving three similar characters (“scavenger,” “serpent” and “ship” in v. 19a–c and two other different personalities, such as the “rake” and “adulteress” in vv. 19d and 20a), but rather signifies a close relation, which v. 20 further explains. The term מְנָאָפֶּת requires the performative subject אִּשָּׁה because the verb נאף can also be used for a man and generally is applied to false sinful swearing or the transgression of vows (cf. Lev 20:10; Jer 23:10; Mal 3:5). The verb נאף in the Pi’el participle is also found in Jer 23:10; Ezek 16:32; Hos 3:1; 7:4 and Mal 3:5 and regularly signifies adultery or a transgression against the vow of marriage. The violation of a marital relationship is cited in the MT in, e.g., 2 Sam 11–12; Jer 5:7; Hos 4:13, and results in dishonor, disgrace and even death (Lev 20:10–21). The adulteress and prostitute (זָנָה) go hand-in-hand, although the context sometimes specifies the difference (cf. Ezek 16:31–34; Prov 6:20–35). The construction נָאַפֵּת characterizes not a virgin (בְּתוּלָה) or a girl (עַלְמָה) but an adult and, thus, regularly a “married woman” (אִּשָּׁה) who is committing sin but who is not caught in flagranti and, therefore, remains legally unpunished (cf. Num 5:12–13). Thus, a sinful אִּשָּׁה (“married woman”) is contrasted here with a pure עַלְמָה (“unmarried girl”), being juxtaposed with the sinful רֶּד (the rake), who is completely absorbed

19–31, 323) read here the exclamatory clause (De même!) “Le chemin d’une femme adultere:” ([The same!] “The way of an adulterous woman”).
417 Cf. LaSor, *Handbook*, §30.34.
by passion toward the pure girl. The adulteress in Prov 30:20 goes together with the other subjects of the segment: “scavenger, serpent, ship, “sinful rake” and “adulteress.” As noted earlier, none of them remains unpunished or unconsumed and, thus, the man who commits sin is similar to an adulterous woman who, sinning in secret, claims to be safe whose time in reality is running out with fatal consequences (cf. Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18; Lev 20:10). The Mēhuppākh lēgarmēh does not emphasize the following word אִּשֶָ֗ה, but rather מְנַָּ֫אָ֥פֶּת on which the ‘ōlé wēyōrēd (cf. v. 1a) is stressed, while the disjunctive Rēhūia ‘gādōl on אִּשֶָ֗ה acts as a strong pre-tone to the ‘ōlé wēyōrēd on מְנַָּ֫אָ֥פֶּת. The translation of the first half of the sentence of v. 20 is “Thus, the way (of the consumption) of an adulteress ...”

The verb אכל (“to eat,” “to consume”), invoking the “consumption” of the preceding subjects in v. 19, plays a major role as a predicate that links the actions of the subjects and the reactions of their objects in vv. 19 and 20. The verb אכל previously mentioned in vv. 1, 14 and 17 is used for the last time in the chapter with the metaphoric meaning of sexual consummation, here as a euphemism for the noun

419 The LXX differs from the MT, reading ἦ ὁ τῶν πράξεων ἀπονιψαμένη (“who, as soon as the finishes, washes herself”). The Vg follows the Hebrew syntax, reading quae comedit et turgens os suum (“who eats and wipes her mouth”). The Syriac in the participle Afiel of ḫakā (“wipe away”) could also be read as “deny” or “negate” and thus ḫakā should be read as “consuming, she denied by her mouth.” Here, the Targum follows the MT: אכלה ומחפרא פومة (“she ate and wiping her mouth”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as Frankenberg, Sprüche, 163; Delitzsch, Commentary, 295; Oesterley, Proverbs, 277; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 608; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 870) “sie isset wischt ihr Mund” (“she ate and wiping her mouth”). Hodgson, (p. 85), and Doederlein (Sprüche, 191; as well as De Wette, 394; Scott, Proverbs, 179; Schneider, Sprüche, 162; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) read “sie genieset wischt den Mund” (“she takes pleasure, wipes her mouth”). In a similar manner, Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 362) reads “sie wischt nach den Genuß den Mund” (“after eating, she wipes her mouth”). Meinhold (Sprüche, 504; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323), following the principal idea of the Hebrew sentence, translate “Hat sie gegessen, wischt sie sich ihren Mund ab” (“after eating, she wipes her mouth”).
“fornication.” The Qal perfect opens, continues and concludes the action of self-consumption, while the verb יָסָס in the wāw consecutive perfect depicts the subsequent, simultaneously “hidden” or “forbidden” action, with a Heilshandlung intention.420 The verb יָסָס is without the direct object particle אֵת (cf. Exod 17:14; Deut 9:14; 25:9; 2 Kgs 21:13; cf. Gen 6:7; Exod 17:14; Ps 69:29), which might have been omitted for metrical reasons. The direct object פֶּה with the suff. 3 fs פִּיהָ in the MT after has the pejorative meaning of the “mouth” of the earth which swallows the enemy (cf. Gen 4:11; Num 16:30,32; 26:10; Deut 11:6; Ps 69:16; Isa 5:14; Zech 5:8). Elsewhere, according to the Vg (see translation of v. 16), the “mouth” could also allude to a woman’s genitals. The noun also includes the reflection of deep emotions (cf. v. 32; see also Deut 30:14; Ps 5:10; Prov 4:20–27; 6:12–14).421 Since the noun פֶּה can generally represent the feeling of the heart (cf. Deut 30:14; Ps 5:10) and, body (Prov 4:20–27; 6:12–14), the meaning of פֶּה in v. 20 may be understood as a euphemism for a woman’s genitals. The אְתִחְנָה denotes the principal division of the first half of the verse, which should be translated as: “she consumes (herself by fornication), washes her ‘mouth.’”

After the occurrences in vv. 9, 15 and 16, this is the last usage of בָּשָׂר in the chapter.

422 The LXX offers here a complex syntax with its οὐδὲν φησιν πεπραχέναι ἄτοπον (“she says to do nothing inappropriate”). The Vg simplifies the syntax, reading dicit non sum operata malum (“she says: I did no bad things”). The Syr goes further in simplifying the Hebrew syntax: ܘܐܡܪܐܡܕܡܠܐܥܒܕܬ (“and said I did nothing”). The Tg interprets the Hebrew with an additional object: ואמרת לא עבדית מידעם רעאתא (“and said I did nothing evil”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 870) has direct speech here “und spricht ‘Ich habe nicht böses getan’” (“I did nothing wrong”). In a similar manner, Ziegler (Übersetzung, 362; as well as de Wette, 394; Oesterley, Proverbs, 277; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 608; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368)
The second wāw consecutive perfect of the verb אָמְרָה with the simultaneous actions of “washing and saying” refers to the previous sentence. The verb פעל denotes the declarative negation of the sin “I did not do” with the object אָוֶּן, which also may allude to the juridical process: “… I cannot be charged because I did no wrongdoing,” but the noun אָוֶּן is mostly sapiential (eleven times in Job, twenty-four times in Psalms and nine times in Proverbs). It refers to people with evil inclinations, evil habits and deeds, and lawlessness in general (Job 11:11,14; 15:35; 22:15; 34:8; Pss 5:6; 6:9; 14:4) who cannot always be juridically corrected (Job 4:8; 5:6; 11:14; 15:35; 36:21; Pss 14:4; 28:31; 53:5; 59:3) because of their false testimony and lies (Pss 28:3; 36:4,5 Prov 6:12; 17:14; 19:28) but who are ready for constant mischief (Job 34:36; Prov 12:21; 21:15; 22:8), and liable to God’s punishment (Pss 56:8; 59:6; Prov 10:29) and self-destruction (Pss 92:8; 101:8). The adulteress violates the Law and is ultimately guilty of wickedness against God (cf. Isa 10:1; Amos 5:5). The disjunctive רְבָה יְמַגְּרָה on אָוֶּן acts as a pre-tone to the Sillûq on אָוֶּן. The verse should be read as follows: “Thus the adulteress, she consumes (herself) by fornication, washes her ‘mouth’ and says: ‘I did no...”

reads “ich hab nichts Uebels begangen” (“I have not committed wickedness”), while Hodgson (p. 86) translates “and said, ‘I have committed no sin.’” Doederlein (Sprüche, 191, as well as Frankenberg, Sprüche, 163; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504) similarly reads “und spricht: ‘ich habe nicht Unrechtes verubt’” (“and says, ‘I have not committed iniquity’”). Ewald (p. 258) in an interpretative manner renders here “so kommt es mit (so ist die Art) der Ehebrecherin. Sie isst und wischt ab ihren Mund spricht dann: ich that kein Unheil” (“thus it is with [thus is the manner of] the prostitute. She eats and wipes her mouth and then says: ‘I did no mischief’”). Schneider (Sprüche, 162, as well as Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599) translates less assertively: “ich habe nichts Schl[echtes getan” (“I have done nothing wrong”).

wrongdoing.

The denominal preposition תַּחַת opens a prepositional objective clause describing the circumstances of the subject or the circumstances under which an action is being accomplished. The chiastic A ≤ B formula has the meaning “under three, encapsulated under four.” The syntax of the following verses is complex, due to the many subordinate clauses governed by the preposition תַּחַת. The cardinal numeral in the feminine gender corresponds to the following verb and noun in the feminine. The predicate רָגְז (to quake,” cf. Ps 77:19; Isa 14:9; 32:11; Joe 2:10) in the Qal perfect comes before the noun and, thus, emphatically represents the main unanimous verb of the entire sentence (cf. Gen 3:10, 19). The noun הֶרֶץ determines not only the predicate רָגְז but also the negating predicate of the following sentence הָיִם. The two Mīnahs on תַּחַת and רָֻ֣גְזָה come before the

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424 The LXX follows the Hebrew text, reading the verb in the passive διὰ τριῶν σκιῶν ἡ γῆ (“under three things the earth quake”), while the Vg per tria moveur terra (“because of three things the earth moves”). The Syr, close to the Vg, reads “(under three the earth moves),” while the Tg has the same lexical pattern as the Hebrew: תַּחַת תלת רָגְז אֶרֶץ (“under three things the earth quakes”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59) reads “Drei Dinge erschüttern das Land” (“three things shake the land”). In a similar manner, Doederlein (Sprüche, 194) reads “Drei Dinge laßen ein Land in Unruhe” (“three things make a land agitated”). Alternatively, Hodgson (p. 86) has “at three things the earth is displeased.” Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 362, as well as Ewald, 259; Delitzsch, Commentary, 299; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 163; Toy, Commentary, 532; Bertheau, 173; Scott, Proverbs, 179; Oesterley, Proverbs, 277; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Schneider, Sprüche, 163; Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez I proverbi, I proverbi, 608; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) follows the Hebrew syntax when he reads “Unter Dreien bebt/zittert das Land” (“under three things the land shake”). Meinhold (Sprüche, 504) offers a similar solution, reading “Unter dreiern wird das Land erregt” (“under three things the land is agitated”). Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 873) reads here “Under three things the earth quakes.”

425 BDB, 1065; LaSor, Handbook, §31.4; Joüon, §154f.

426 GKC, §156.

427 Ginsburg and Weinberger (p. 635), similarly to the Vg, introduce a causal clause here, translating “because of three things earth trembles” as does Plaut (Proverbs, 306), who translates “for three things the earth doth quake.”

428 LaSor, Handbook, §31.43.

subject אֵֶּ֑רֶּץ, which with the 'athnāh indicates the principal division of the first half of the verse.

The coordinative wāw refers to the precision of the numeral four and the repetition of the denominal preposition with the feminine cardinal number ארבע (“four”), following the pattern of “three enclosed in four,” as is also evident in the preceding segment of vv. 18–20. The negating predicate in the Qal imperfect of the auxiliary verb נשא expresses an action that “cannot be stopped.” Thus, the “earth” is presented passively and, via the first predicate רָגְזָה, reflects the turbulence caused by another subject, while by the second negating predicate, לא ארבעה, it denotes action that leads to complete destruction. Thus, the translation of the verse is “In three, encapsulated in four (circumstances), the earth quakes and cannot stop (quaking).”

430 The LXX shortens the Hebrew dependent clause, reading τὸ δὲ τέταρτον οὐ δύναται φέρειν (“as well four that cannot support”). The Vg similarly reads et quartum non potest sustinere (“and fourth cannot sustain”). The Syr uses here verbܫܟܚ (“to find”) as an auxiliary verb and reads וַתַּחַת אְַּ֜רְבֶַ֗ע לא תּוּכַ֥ל שְׂאִֵֽת׃ (“and under four do not find how to endure”). The Tg closely follows the Syr, reading דמסיברה (“and under four do not find how to endure”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 362; Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 608; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 873) follows the Hebrew, reading “und das Vierte kann es nicht ertragen” (“and the fourth it cannot bear”). Similarly to Müntinghe, Delitzsch (Commentary, 299 as well as Frankenberg, Sprüche, 163; Toy, Commentary, 532; Plöger, Sprüche, 353; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504) reads “and under four it cannot stand” and Ewald (p. 259, as well as Hodgson; Bertheau, 173; Oesterley, Proverbs, 277; Schneider, Sprüche, 163; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368): “unter vier kann es nicht aushalten” (“under four things it cannot endure”). In a similar manner, Murphy (Proverbs, 232) offers his translation “under four it cannot carry on.” Doederlein (Sprüche, 194; similarly Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323) has here “und Vier sind unerträglich” (“and four are unbearable”). Waltke’s commentary (Proverbs 15–31, 460) on Stolz’s (“רָגְז,” TLOT 2:775) translation “and four it cannot produce” as a poor parallel to the following “shake” seems correct. Scott (Proverbs, 179) translates here “There are four it cannot tolerate.”

431 Cf. GKC, §113.1.
The circumstantial preposition modifies a clause of condition and consequence. Since the range of the meaning of the noun עֶּבֶּד is very extensive in the MT, from “slave” as the “master’s possession” (cf. Exod 21:7; Lev 25:38–46) through an “official” (C. Westermann, “עֶּבֶּד,” TLOT, 2:821) to a king as the vassal of another monarch (cf. 2 Kgs 16:7; 2 Chr 12:8; Ezra 9:9), its meaning here depends on the preceding verse and the context of the present verse. The particle כי with the Qal imperfect “is used to express a condition and consequence that are regarded as being capable of fulfillment in the present and future.” The verb מְלַכֶּה, as a denominative of the noun מֶלֶךְ (“king”) that means “to be(come) king” is emphatic here and in antithesis with the subject עֶּבֶּד that denotes neither a king’s slave nor a king’s functionary, such as a priest or prophet (cf. Neh 9:32, 34; Jer 1:18; 2:26; 8:1; 32:32; 44:17, 21). The noun עֶּבֶּד thus does not determine the status as the title שַׂר here: “the functionary minister of the king” (cf. 1 Kgs 4:1ff.), but rather a sort of “king’s

432 The LXX understands the Hebrew noun עֶּבֶּד as “house servant” and reads the verb emphatically in the aorist subjunctive ἐὰν οἰκῆτις [βασιλεύῃ] (“if the house servant should reign [rule]”). The Vg also reads the verb מְלַכֶּה emphatically in the perfect subjunctive per servum cum regnaverit (“for the servant who would reign”). The Syr has here the verb מְלַכֶּה in the Qal and reads תִּחַת עֶּבֶּד כד נִימֶלֶכֶה (under the servant when he reigns”). The Tg follows the Syr, reading תִּחַת עֶּבֶּד כַּדְּ נִימֶלֶכֶה (“under the servant when he reigns”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as Delitzsch, Commentary, 299; Toy, Commentary, 532; Scott, Proverbs, 179; Schneider, Sprüche, 163; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 608; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 873; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) reads here “Ein Sklave, der König wird”—“a slave, who becomes king,” while Doederlein (Sprüche, 194) “Ein Sklav, der Regent wird” (“a slave who becomes a regent”) and Bertheau (p. 173), comparing Prov 19:10, reads “unter dem Schlaven, wenn er das Regiment hat” (“under the slave when he has the rulership”). Ziegler (Übersetzung, 362, as well as Ewald, 259; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 163; Plöger, Sprüche, 353) reads “Unter einem Schlaven, der Herrscher wird” (“under a slave who becomes the ruler”). By contrast, Hodgson (p. 86) has “a servant who beareth rule,” while Waltke (Proverbs, 15–31, 460) prefers to read here “an official when he becomes king.”

433 GKC, §159b.
434 BDB, 572–73; Gesenius, 3:686.
435 Instead, Bickell (p. 295) sees here a “Hithpael in affectativer Bedeutung.”
personal staff member” who serves the king as a “butler” (cf. 1 Kgs 1:47; 1 Sam 13:31–36; 18:20–26; see also 1 Kgs 11:26; 2 Kgs 12:21ff.; 2 Kgs 14:5; 2 Kgs 21:23).436 Thus, here the term דבש polarizes the relation servant-king. In other words, according to the royal hierarchy, the דבש is without any status but according to his service, the דבש can be physically close to the king. Thus, the translation of the verse should be as follows: “In the circumstance when the butler reigns (becomes a king).”

The copulative wāw links the circumstantial sentences into one complex clause, which with the particle serves to add an explanation and circulative intensity to the previous sentence: “likewise,” “or.”438 The substantival use of an adjective as the

436 U. Rüterswörden, “דבש,” TDOT 10:391 notes that “given the close relationship between דבש and רעב, it must have appeared particularly condemnable when דבש rebelled or conspired against the master, or actually killed him.”

437 The LXX reads the verb in the aorist subjunctive καὶ ἄφρων πλησθῇ σιτίων (”and the weak-minded would be saturated by food,” cf. note on v. 2a). The Vg, as well as the LXX, uses the same noun as in v. 2a, reading per stultum cum saturatus fuerit cibo (“by the fool when saturated by food.” The Syr follows the Hebrew syntax, reading ”(and under the fool who is sated with food”). The Aramaic verb "טופש" (”be dull”) is close here to the Greek ἄφρων: τοστάσεως Ὁστάσεως (“and the dulled who is sated by food”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 59, as well as Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 323) has here “Ein Narr im Überfluss” (“a fool in abundance”) and Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 363) “und einem Narren, der gesättigt ist” (“and a fool who is satiated”), as well as Ewald (p. 259; similarly Schneider, Sprüche, 163; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Murphy, Proverbs, 232) reads “Narren wann er Brot hat satt” (”a fool when he is sated by bread”). Frankenberg (Sprüche, 163, as well as Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Plöger, Sprüche, 353; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368), similarly to Ewald, reads “ein Thor sich (reichlich an Brot) sättigen kann” (”a fool [who] can sate himself abundantly”) and Scott (Proverbs, 179) “an obstinate fool when he is filled with food.” Steinmann (Proverbs, 599) has “a complete fool when he is filled with food,” while Hodgson (p. 86) opts for “And a fool who hath obtained riches” and Toy (Commentary, 532) “a fool when he is prosperous.” By contrast, Delitzsch (Commentary, 299; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224) reads here “a profligate when he has bread enough,” while Bertheau (p. 173) “und dem Ruchlosen, wenn er Brot genug hat” (”and the wicked when he has enough bread”) and Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 608) “bifolco sazio di pane” (“a yokel sated by bread”). Similarly, Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 873) reads “a scoundrel, when he has his fill of bread” and Longman (Proverbs, 517) “and a blunderhead when sated with food.” Instead, Doederlein (Sprüche, 194) reads here “Ein Gottesleugner, wenn er satt ist” (“a denier of God when he is satiated”) and Waltke (Proverbs, 15–31, 460; 494), renders descriptively “a social outcast when he becomes full of food.”

438 GKC, §154; cf. §141e.
subject opens the clause. The adjective נָבָל involves both the status and attitudes, and differs from ובאר (“ruined,” “deranged,” cf. v. 2) or כְסִי (“narrow-minded”). The term נָבָל in the the MT (eighteen occurrences) regularly relates to disrespect, shamelessness and indecency (cf. 2 Sam 13:13; Job 30:8; Prov. 17:7, 21; Isa 14:16; 32:5), even godlessness (Isa 9:16–17; 32:5; Pss 14:1; 74:18, 22). The sexual abuse of David’s daughter Tamar by her sibling Amnon, who is called נָבָל in 2 Sam 13:13, matches well with the use of the term in the following clause of Prov 30:23 (שְׂנוּאָה). The status of the raped Tamar (חֶרְפָה—“defilement”) in 2 Sam 13:15 is explained as “the corrupted virginity of an unmarried woman” who becomes generally “hated” (שָׂנֵא) and “rejected” by society (cf. 2 Samuel 13). Thus, the personality designated by the adjective נָבָל should be understood as a “shameless man.” The particle כִּי marks the consequence “that” or “when” with the Qal imperfect of שָׂבַע (already attested three times in Proverb 30; cf. vv. 9, 15 and 16), which also refers to a consequence that cannot be stopped. The verb שָׂבַע in conjunction with the object לֶחֶם refers not only to “satiety” but also to “prosperity,” “well being” and consequently a higher status in the society (cf. 1 Sam 2:5; Job 27:14; Ps 132:15; Prov 12:11; 20:13). A plastically presented contrastive parallelism

439 *TLOT* 2:270.
442 Marböck (“כְסִי,” *TDOT* 9:163) asserts that the vocable נָבָל in Prov 30:22 describes “most likely a low and common individual, who oversteps his limits when things are going well.” It is more likely, however that the term does not refer to a condition of wealth, but more generally designates a person without any respect for the surrounding society.
with the same construction in Prov 28:19 between “abundance” (יִּשְׂבַע-לֹא) as well as “misery” (יִּשְׂבַע-רִּיש) corresponds to v. 22b.\footnote{Not only in conjunction with the noun אֹיָּבֵי, but also with the plural noun עֲיָבוֹת (“days”), the verb יִּשְׂבַע describes longevity and blessing (Gen 35:29; 1 Chr 23:1; Job 42:17) while with the noun אֶרֶץ (“earth,” or “land”) it expresses the abundance and fertility of the earth (Gen 41:29,30; Ps 104:13).} The רְבִּיה muґraš on יָבֵא הָאֹיָּבֵי marks the penultimate disjunctive accent in the verse, where the מָעֲנָה on יִּשְׂבַע closely links the particle with the following morphemes and the סילַע on יִּשְׂבַע marks the conclusion of the verse, which would be translated as follows: “In the circumstance when the butler reigns (becomes a king) or a shameless man prospers (in society).”

The fourth determinative preposition in the verbal clause opens the concluding deepest (Prov 31:31, 23a).

\footnote{444 The LXX synchronizes v. 22 and v. 23 when it reads καὶ οικείας ἐὰν ἐκβάλῃ τὴν ἐσώτης κυριάν (“and the housemaid when she would expel her mistress”). The Vg uses here mulier odiosa, a term well known in the Roman comedies as a description of a woman who is neither “amiable nor attractive” (cf. Catharine Saunders, Costume in Roman Comedy [New York, Columbia University Press, 1909] 71) and translates per odiosam mulierem cum in matrimonio fuerit adsumpta (“for a repulsive woman who has married.”) The Syr has the fem. adjective مُحْبِّبَة reading مُحْبَبَة (”and under the odious one who stays with the man”). The Tg follows the Syr when it reads שָׂנֵא נָבֶּל (“under the odious one who stays with the man”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60) in an explanatory manner translates the sentence as “Eine Frau vom Manne gehasst, die seine Liebe wieder erlangt” (“A woman hated by the man, who regains his love”) and Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 324; as well as Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 460; Murphy, Proverbs, 232; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) “devant une femme odieuse qui se marié” (“before an odious woman who marries”) while Hodgson (p. 86, as well as Delitzsch, Commentary, 299, Gemser, Sprüche, 82) opts for “a worthless woman when she becometh married.” Frankenberg (163; as well as Whybray, 416; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 608; Clifford, Proverbs, 264) Niph’al יִּשְׂבַע reads as “wenn eine Verstoßene einen Mann bekommt” (“when a rejected one gets a husband”), and Scott (Proverbs, 179) “an unpopular woman when she gets a husband,” as well as Longman (Proverbs, 517) “under a disdained woman when she gets a husband,” while Schneider (Sprüche, 163) renders “Unter einer Verschmähten, wenn sie geheiratet wird” (“under a scorned woman when she becomes a wife”). Steinmann (Proverbs, 599) reads “under a woman who is hated when she is wed,” and Plöger (Sprüche, 352–354; cf. Meinhold, Sprüche, 504) translates “eine Zurückgesetzt (die nicht beachtet und übergangen worden ist), wenn sie geheiratet wird” (“an old maid [who is not cared about and who has been passed over] when she gets married”). By contrast, Ewald (p. 259; cf. Bertheau, 173; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117) reads “einer hässlichen wann sie zu Ehe kommt” (“an ugly one when she comes to marriage”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 363) sees here the role of polygamy when a woman succeeds another and translates “Unter der Verachteten, die wieder mit dem Mann vereinigt wird” (“under the despised who is reunited with the man”) and Toy (Commentary, 532) “an unwooed woman when she (at last) finds a husband.” Doederlein (Sprüche, 194) opts for “eine Geschiedene, wenn sie wieder einen Mann bekommt” (“a divorcée, when she again got a man”). Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 873) renders the passive יִּשְׂבַע in active יִּשְׂבַע (“mastery,” “domination”), reading “under a hateful woman, when she gains mastery.”}
circumstantial clauses of the segment. The verb שָׂנֵא generally means “to hate” a person or enemy (Gen 26:27; 29:31,33: 37:4; Lev 19:17; 26:17; 1 Kgs 22:8; Job 8:22; Pss 9:14; 101:3; 119:113), “to hate” the righteous (Pss 35:19; 38:20; 69:5), the miserable (Prov 14:20; 19:7), “to hate” the people (Exod 1:10; Pss 44:8; 105:25) or “to hate” God (Exod 20:5 [Deut 5:9]; Lev 10:35; Ps 68:2) or those whom God “hates” (Deut 7:10; Pss 5:6; 11:5; 18:18,41; Jer 12:8). Hatred is closely related to homicide (Deut 4:42; 19:4, 6), but also to an unfaithful woman. The verb שָׂנֵא related to a woman can designate a “fiancée’s corrupted virginity” (Deut 22:14) or a “wife’s immorality” (Deut 21:15; Judg 14:16). The Qal passive שְׂנוּאָה (cf. Isa 60:15) is opposed to אֲהוּבָה in Deut 21:15 and distinguishes a “divorced wife” (שְׂנוּאָה) from a “beloved wife” (אֲהוּבָה). Using the same verb, Mal 2:16 proclaims a warning by God regarding divorce and faithlessness. In these two cases, the term שְׂנוּאָה, in relation to a married woman, includes her moral lapse that results in divorce, so that שְׂנוּאָה could be translated as a “divorcée.” Turning to 2 Sam 13:13–15, the verb שָׂנֵא is similar, if not parallel, to the vocable נַבָּל (“shameless man”). The term refers to the sexual intercourse of an unmarried virgin, including all the negative repercussions in society for a disgraced, corrupt woman.445 Thus, the term נַבָּל in Prov 30:23 would be parallel to נַבָּל in Prov 30:22 and translated as a “shameless woman.”446 The particle כִּי with the verb בעל (“be married,” “be situated,” cf. Isa 62:4) in the Niph’al imperfect demonstrates the condition or circumstance of the

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445 The terms do not imply family tie between Amnon and Tamar (cf. 2 Sam 13:13).
446 Wideboer (p. 88) translates the lexeme נַבָּל as “eine Gehasste, eine alte Jungfer” — “a hated one, a spinster.”
noun שְׂנוּאָה with the meaning: “In (the circumstance) when a shameless woman marries.”

The wāw copulativum links two dependent clauses under one objective idea: “… or …” The noun שִּפְחָה is regularly part of a cluster with the noun עֶּבֶּד (Gen 12:16; 20:14; 24:35; 1 Sam 8:16; 2 Kgs 5:26; Est 7:4; Ps 123:2; Isa 14:2; Jer 34:9; Joel 3:2) and refers to a woman who is subjected to the authority of a lord, prophet or king (Ruth 2:13; 1 Sam 1:18; 25:27, 41; 28:21; 2 Sam 14:12,15; 2 Kgs 5:26; Est 7:4; Ps 123:2; Isa 14:2; Jer 34:9; Joel 3:2). The noun שִּפְחָה occurs in relation to גְבִָֽירָה (“mistress”), as in this case, this narrows the meaning of שִּפְחָה and focuses its object: “Herrin”—“mistress.” Thus, Hagar in Gen 16:1 is a personal maidservant of Sarah, Zilpah in Gen 29:24 is personal maid of Leah, and Bilhah in Gen 29:29 is

447 The LXX switches v. 23b with 23a, which becomes the construction of v. 22a and reads καὶ μοσητὴ γυνὴ ἰὰν τύχῃ ἀνδρὸς ἄγαθοῦ (“and an odious woman when she would find a good man”). By contrast, the Vg follows the Hebrew syntax et per ancillam cum heres fuerit dominae suae (“and the housemaid who succeeds her mistress”). The Syr, using form of the word نفقات “(to expel), translates وتنحأ أمأة دمفسا لمرتح “(and a housemaid who succeeds her mistress). The Tg reads והמתא דירתא לרבונתה “(a housemaid who succeeds her mistress). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60, as well as Ewald, 259; Bertheau, 173; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) follows here the primary meaning of the Hebrew word ירשה, reading “und eine Sklavin die an ihrer Frau erbt” (“a maid who succeeds her mistress”), while Hodgson (p. 86; Scott, Proverbs, 179; Whybray, 417; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 608; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Steinmann, Proverbs, 599) renders “a handmaid who hath supplanted her mistress,” and Doederlein (Sprüche, 194, as well as Delitzsch, Commentary, 299; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 163; Plöger, Sprüche, 353; Toy, Commentary, 532; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224) reads “und eine Sklavin, die Erbin ihre Frau wird” (“and the maid, who becomes an heiress of her mistress”), while Schneider (Sprüche, 163), following the LXX’s verb ἐκβάλλει, reads Hebrew כִּי־תִּירַש כִּי־תְגָרֵש “(that casts out)” rendering the clause as “und einer Sklavin, wenn sie ihre Herrin enthronet” (“and a maidservant when she dethrones her mistress;” see here Grätz, “Exegetische,” 442). Waltke (Proverbs, 15–31, 461; as well as Longman, Proverbs, 517) similarly reads “and a maidservant when she dispossesses her mistress.” Clifford (Proverbs, 264; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 324) and Murphy (Proverbs, 232) have here “a maidservant when she displaces her mistress.” Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 363; as well as Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117) translates “und einer Sklavin, die ihre Frau verdrängt als Konkubine” (“and a maid who displaces her mistress as a concubine”).


subject to Rachel. In Deut 28:69, it is noted that the maid is usually sold to or inherited by (cf. Lev 13:30) the mistress and her status is that of a “personal slave.” The particle כִּי concludes the chain of circumstantial clauses. The verb ירש refers to the usurpation of the place of a married woman or wife (cf. Gen 22:17; 24:60; 28:4; Exod 34:24; Lev 20:24; Num 14:12; 21:24; 32:39; 33:52; Deut 1:8; 4:1–38; Josh 13:1–13). In addition, in Gen 15:3 Abraham complains about his unsuitable heir Eliezer, who is part of his household. The רבי on וְּ֜שִּפְחֶָ֗ה leads into the copulative מְחֶּֽטֶּֽהֹג on חש וּרְשָׁה, while the מְרַחֹֽשְׁך shows the conjunctive accent with the following noun הנִלֶּֽגֶּֽבֶּֽה, which, with the סידַע, marks the last tone-syllable of the verse. The sixth Petuhah in the chapter precedes the next segment of vv 24–27. The translation of the entire verse would be “In (the circumstance) when a shameless woman marries and a personal maid disinherits her mistress.”

In v. 24, the chiastic formula A ≤ B is broken, where the number “four” does not offer the chastic structure A,A’ and B,B’ but rather A,B,C,D. The independent personal pronoun הם serves here as a copula and the numeral “four” reverts to the masculine gender. The מִינָֽה on הנִלֶּֽגֶּֽה is disjunctive and דֵּֽהִ on הם is prepositive to the modifying כְָֽרַּאִֽאֲֽלָֽאֵֽרֶ֥ץ.


451 With the particle δέ, the LXX opens an additional proverbial numerical segment of the previous verse: τέσσαρα δέ ἐστιν (“actually, there are”), while the Vg sees new section here: Quattuor sunt (“there are four”). The Syr, instead of a masculine number as in the Hebrew, reads the feminine כְָֽרַּאִֽאֲֽלָֽאֵֽרֶ֥ץ (“there are four” [f]) and the Tg does the same in reading רְבָּעִֽים אָֽתֶּֽהָ (“there are four”). Delitzsch (Commentary, 301; cf. Sauer, Sprüche, 108) translates “Four are the little things.” By contrast, Doederlein (Sprüche, 195) reads here “Vier Tiere” (“four animals”).
The adjective קָטָן, besides the adjectival meaning “small,” in the MT also refers to the determination of human age and usually means “young” or “younger” (cf. Gen 9:24; 19:11; 27:15; 29:16; 42:13, 15, 20, 32, 34: 43:29; Judg 1:13; 3:9; 1 Sam 5:9). In addition, the adjective serves to compare similar or different things (cf. Gen 1:16; Exod 18:22, 26; Deut 25:14) and often goes together with לְנוֹת, marking the limit between “small” and “big,” or “no one” and “all” as well as “nothing” and “everything” (cf. 1 Sam 20:2; 22:15; 25:36; 30:19; 1 Kgs 22:31; 2 Kgs 25:26; Pss 104:25; 115:30; Jer 6:13ff.; Jon 3:5). In addition, קָטָן as an attribute modifies its noun (cf. 2 Kgs 2:23; 4:10; 5:14; Qoh 9:14; Isa 11:6; Am 6:11), although standing by itself can serve as the epitome of an “insignificant person” (Num 22:18; Deut 1:17; 1 Sam 9:21; 15:17; 2 Sam 7:19; 1 Kgs 8:64; 2 Kgs 18:24 [Isa 36:9]; Job 3:19; Obadiah 1:2) or “meaningless thing” (cf. 1 Kgs 2:20). The adjectival noun קְטַנֵי can also be compared with the adjectival noun גְדֵי, which serves as a collective term for “nobles,” “riches,” “great men” (cf. 2 Kgs 10:6, 11) and, according to Wellhausen...
(cited by Montgomery)\(^{453}\) is a later gloss in the Book of Kings and, accordingly, a later Hebrew derivative noun. The adjective קְטַנֵי “in construct to substantive that is definite may be superlative (cf. Mic 7:4),"\(^{454}\) thus “the smallest of the earth” (cf. Ringgren and Zimmerli, *Sprüche*, 117).

The wāw is adversative here, while the independent pronoun is emphatic and goes together with the following plural חֲכָמִּים, which denotes “wise people” or “personalities who have aptitudes” to act accordingly with their positions in society (cf. v. 3b). The adjective חֲכָם in the plural masculine form suits the collective subject. The Pu'al participle refers to natural talents or learned and acquired skills (cf. Exod 1:8–10; 1 Kgs 3:12; 2 Chr 11:22–23; Jer 3:15) and here serves as an


\(^{454}\) Williams’ Hebrew Syntax, § 78.

The LXX, instead of the personal pronoun used by the Hebrew, Syriac and Aramaic to replace the demonstrative pronoun, uses the adjective σοφός in the nominative neuter plural and reads τῶν σοφῶν τῶν σοφῶν (“these are wiser than the wise”). The Vg also reads the comparative of sapiens in the neuter plural ipsa sunt sapientiora sapientibus (“these are wiser than the sages”). The Syr has the superlative here מְחֻכָמִּים (“and these [they] are sages of sages”). According to Wildeboer (p. 88, as well as Sauer, *Sprüche*, 108; Murphy, *Proverbs*, 233), the Hebrew compound מְחֻכָמִּים is a intensificator of the adjective pl. חֲכָמִּים—“gewitzigte Weise” (“shrewdly wise”), which the LXX and Vg read with the comparative מֵחֲכָמִּים “(wiser als die Weisen) or “wisest”). Gemser (*Sprüche*, 82, Meinhold, *Sprüche*, 504) follows Wilderboer’s proposition “und doch gewitzigte Weise” (“and yet shrewdly wise”) and Hodgson (p. 86) reads similarly “yet eminent in wisdom.” Frankenberg (*Sprüche*, 164) reads the Hebrew phrase as “und sind hervorragend klug” (“and are outstendigly wise”) and Plöger (*Sprüche*, 353, as well as Waltke, *Proverbs*, 15–31, 461; Sæbø, *Sprüche*, 368) opts for “sind (doch) über alle Maßen weise” (“and are eminently wise above all”). Delitzsch (Commentary, 301) translates “and yet they are quick of wit—wise.” In a similar manner, Longman (*Proverbs*, 517) reads “but they are apex in wisdom.” Müntinghe (*Die Sprüche*, 60, as well as Doederlein, *Sprüche*, 195; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, *I proverbi*, 469) prefers the LXX translation here, “und doch weiser als die Weisen” (“and yet wiser than the wise”), while Ewald (p. 260; Barucq, *Le livre des Proverbes*, 224; Clifford, *Proverbs*, 264) reads the superlative “und doch die Allerweisesten” (“and yet the wisest”). Fox (*Proverbs* 10–31, 878) for the compound מְחֻכָמִּים reads “yet they are wise and skilled.” Steinmann (*Proverbs*, 599) introduces a merism between animals and people, reading “yet they are wiser than the wisest people.” Ziegler (*Uebersetzung*, 363) translates חֲכָמִּים as “philosophers” and reads “und sind doch weiser als die Philosophen” (“and yet they are wiser than philosophers”).
“idiomatic hyperbole,” going together with the emphatic הֵמָה: “extremely wise.”

The Rēḥiʾa ‘muɡraš on קבֹּנֶים and the Mērēkā on קבֹּנֶים show a strong conjunctive connection with the following participle קבֹּנֶים. Thus, the translation of the verse would be as follows: “There are four of the smallest (beings) of the earth but extremely wise.”

The noun קבֹּנֶים the determinate plural with the article and the noun יָם is generic in the singular without the article. The article is usually used for animals “when something is asserted about them, which applies to the whole species” (cf. 2 Sam 17:10). The generic subject of the singular יָם together with the preceding adjective וְְ֜הֵֶ֗מָה in v. 24 is anthropomorphic. The subject קבֹּנֶים is very rare in the MT, occurring only two times, once in the singular קבֹּנֶם in Prov 6:6 and here in the plural with the article. The identical word for “ant” is found in Arabic نملة, while Syriac has another word for “ant,” שושמני, which corresponds to the Aramaic נמלים עַֻם לֹא־עֵֽז

456 Waltke, Proverbs 15–31, 461, n. 66.
457 In the LXX translation, the subject of the nominative mp of μύρμηκας (“ant,” cf. LSJ, 1154) corresponds to the object in the nominative fs of ἵσχυς (“the force”) reading μύρμηκας οἷς μὴ ἔστην ἰσχὺς (“the ants, which are not [some kind of] force”), while the Vg reads formicae populus infirmus (“the infirm ant people”), and the Syr جَلْبَانَا لَامَّا مَحَلَّيْهَا (“the ants, there is no army by them.”). By contrast, the Tg has the verb אִשֵּׂנ (be strong) in the Pē’al part. mp while reading אִשָּׁנָו דָּלָא עָשְׁנ תְּפִלְיָה (“the ants, whose folks are not shown to be strong”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60, as well as Hodgson, 86; Delitzsch, Commentary, 301) reads “Die Ameisen, ein schwaches Geschlecht” (“the ants, a weak lineage”), and Frankenberg (Sprüche, 164; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; cf. Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 609) emphatically translates “Die Ameisten sind ein schwaches Volkchen” (“the ants are little people”), while Doederlein (Sprüche, 195) has “Ameisen, ein Volk ohne Festung” (“ants, a folk without a fortress”). Ewald (p. 260, as well as Sauer, Sprüche, 108; Toy, Commentary, 534; Pflöger, Sprüche, 353; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 878) opts for “Ameisen, gar kein starkes Volk” (“ants, no strong people”), while Gemser (Sprüche, 82, as well as Schneider, Sprüche, 163; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 324; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 461; Szabo, Sprüche, 368) reads “die Ameisten, ein Volk ohne Macht” (“the ants, a people without power”) and Clifford (Proverbs, 264) “ants are a species not strong.” Similarly, Murphy (Proverbs, 233) reads “ants are a group not strong,” while Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 363) has “Ameisen, ein ohnmäch’tger Hause”—“ants, a powerless house.”

458 GKC, §126, m.
The word עַם is treated in the MT as either an individual or collective noun for a “folk” or “people.” Although the biblical term עַם is regularly linked to the Israelite community, the land of Judah and the people of God, its postexilic meaning extends to people who inhabit large areas, such as the ancient northeastern African Kush (cf. Isa 18:2) or the Egyptians (cf. Isa 30:5). Hebrew writings of the Second Temple period distinguish the general term “people,” which can also refer to the “gentiles” (cf. Neh 9:30; Est 8:17) or “foreign people” (1QM 10:9; 1QH 4:26; 1QHab 3:6, 11, 13; 6:7; 8:5), from the “people of God” (1QM 1:15; 3:13) or the “people of the saints” (1QM 12:8; 1QH 11:12). The Aramaic utilizes the noun “ant” as an example of a man who is unimportant in society (Ket 75a) and the lexeme הָעָם for a variety of congregations (Kohen [priest], Levite, Israelite). The unusual reference to the insects with the term הָעָם represents a metaphoric designation for a collectivity with identical characteristics. Ants are a dominant feature of nearly all terrestrial ecosystems and can be found always and everywhere. Their everyday encounters with humans make them the epitome of unimportant but busy hardworking people or “folk.” The adjective עַז is in semantic relation to the noun עָז (“power”). The noun עָז is regularly attributed to God (cf. Pss 28:8; 68:34, 35, 36; 93:1; 96:6; 140:8; Prov 14:26), whereas the adjective is never attributed to God but rather to the enemy or the forces of foreign people (cf. Gen 49:7; Num

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461 Sokoloff, DJBA, 1121.
462 Sokoloff, DJBA, 869.
13:28; Deut 28:50; Dan 8:23; Ps 18:18 [2 Sam 22:18]; Isa 19:4). The Děḥi on
הַַ֭נְמָלִּים is prepositive, while the Mûnah on הבָּן marks the close relation with הבָּן, where the disjunctive accent athnâh signifies the principal division of the first half of the verse. The translation of the first clause is as follows: “The ants, a folk who is not strong.”

The verbal clause depends completely on the subject הבָּן, where the adversative wāw and the imperfect of habit of the verb דָּל לַחָּם have the sense of “prepare” or “complete.” The direct object לֶחֶם with the suff. 3 mp denotes food in general. The intention of the author is not to present ants accurately or biologically as those who lay away stores for the winter, but rather to juxtapose their highly social relationship for the sake of the common good with disregard for the common good. The Ṭarha on הבָּן and the Mûnah on הבָּן with the Sîlûq on לֶחֶם as the

464 The LXX reads here the adversative καὶ, which the majority of modern translators follows: καὶ ἑτοιμάζονται θέρως τὴν τροφήν (“but preparing the food of the summer”), while the Vg has quae praeparant in messe cibum sibi (“who, in the summer, prepare food for themselves”). The Syr has here the verb پلدت ("to prepare," or "to produce") in the Af’el part. mp and the adversative wāw הפך עלייה מַעֲמִּיקָה לְמַעֲמִּיקָה ("producing instead their food from the summer"). The Tg also uses the verb נַעֲמָי (“to put in order,” or “to prepare”) in the Pa’el part. mp and adversative wāw נַעֲמָי מַעֲמִּיקָה לְמַעֲמִיקָה ("producing instead their food in the summer"). Müntinge (Die Sprüche, 60, as well as Hodgson, 86; Delitzsch, Commentary, 301) adapts his translation to the previous clause, reading both in the singular: “das im Sommer seine Speise sich bereitet” ("that prepares its food in summer"), while Doederlein (Sprüche, 196, as well as Ziegler, Übersetzung, 363; Toy, Commentary, 534; Sauer, Sprüche, 108; Plöger, Sprüche, 353; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Sabst, Sprüche, 368) reads the plural “sie machen im Sommer Anstalt zu ihrer Nahrung” ("they make in the summer the storage to their food"). Ewald (p. 260; cf. Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 609; Murphy, Proverbs, 233; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 878) emphazies the adversative wāw, reading in the plural: "und rüsten doch im Sommer ihrer Speise" ("and yet prepare their food in summer"), similarly Frankenberg (Sprüche, 260; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 324) "und besorgen doch im Sommer ihren Bedarf" ("but yet in the summer procure their needs"). Schneider (Sprüche, 163; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117) reads similarly: “und sichern sich doch im Sommer ihr Futter” ("and yet secure for themselves in summer their food"). Waltke (Proverbs, 15–31, 461), by contrast, reads the consecutive wāw here: “so they store up their food in the harvest.”

last tone-syllable of the verse show the symmetry of the verse, which would be translated as follows: “The ants, a folk who is not strong but who prepare their food in summer.”

The same construction as in v. 25 with the same accentuation is present in v. 26a. The subject צָפִין ("a chewer of cud," “an animal with a paw and not a divided hoof;” cf. Lev 11:5–6; Deut 14:7–8) is associated with animals such as “rabbits” or “badgers.” Bickell (“Kritisches,” 296) reads the noun בְּשֵׁמָן as שְַ֭פַנִּים, denoting a “coney” (as does Grätz, “Exegetische,” 442), but the habitat of a coney is mostly fields rather than rock.467 The context alludes to species of mammals such as “badgers” or “rock hyrax” (Plaut, Book of Proverbs, 307). The negated adjectival

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466 The LXX reads καὶ οἱ χοιρογρύλλαι θάνιος οὐκ ἵσχυσαν, where the meaning of the Greek lexeme χοιρογρύλλαι is unknown; according to D’Hamonville (Les Proverbes, 305) the noun onomatopoeically could represent some kind of lizards that live in a community. In Modern Greek γρύλος, -ος is “katydid.” The construction of χοιρός (“the pig”) and γρύλος (“katydid”) may suggest a kind of “grasshopper,” where the grass might hint at food for swine (cf. Mark 5:11: πρὸς τὸ δρει ἀγέλη χοίρον μηγάλη βοοσκόμενη—“on the mountain, a great herd of swine were grazing”). Instead, the Latin word for “badger” is cherogryllum, which onomatopoeically corresponds to the Greek χοιρογρύλλαιος. It is much more probable that the Greek χοιρογρύλλος denotes some kind of “grasshopper” and, thus, the translation of the LXX verse would be “and also the society of grasshoppers is not powerful.” The Vg reads here lepusculus plebs invalida (“the leveret, the weak folk”). The Syr translation corresponds to the meaning of the Latin word cherogryllum when it reads ספין דЊם חסלא (“and hyraxes [badgers] are weak in strength”). The Tg reads גרעלא אדומיא דלאלוא ועי אכי חסלא (“and hyraxes [badgers] are not strong folk”). The Syr translation is followed by Sauer (Sprüche, 108, as well as Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 324; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 609; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 878) while reading “Klippenschliefer, ein Volk, gar nicht kräftig” (“hyraxes, [badgers] a people not strong”), while Ewald (p. 260, as well as Delitzsch, Commentary, 301; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 164; Schneider, Sprüche, 163; Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Garrett, Proverbs, 242; Longnam, Proverbs, 517; Murphy, Proverbs, 233; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Sebo, Sprüche, 368) translates “Klippdachse dann, ein nicht gewaltig Volk” (“then coneys, not a mighty people”). Müntinghe (Sprüche, 60), by contrast, reads here “Die Bergmaus, die wenn gleich unmächtig” (“the mountain mouse, though being also powerless”) and Doederlein (Sprüche, 196, as well as Hodgson, 86; Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 364) “Bergmäuse, ein Volk ohne Rüstung” (“mountain mice, a people without armor”), while Scott (Proverbs, 180) has here “Marmots are a feeble species, yet they make their home on a cliff.” Toy (Commentary, 534) transliterates the Hebrew word as “shaphans” considering the term to designate not as a “coney” or “rabbit” but rather as some kind of Palestinian “hyrax,” which Plaut (Proverbs, 307, as well as Steinmann, Proverbs, 600) translates as “The rock-badgers are but a feeble folk” and Waltke (Proverbs, 15–31, 461) “rock badgers without numerical strength.”

predicate עָצוּם ("mighty" or "vast") has the connotation of a powerful nation, mostly designated by the term גוֹי ("a nation" or "gentiles" in general; cf. Num 22:6; Deut 9:14; Ps 35:18; Isa 60:22; Joel 1:6; 2:5; Mic 4:7). The similarity in the syntax of v. 25a and 26a creates a movement from very small but highly social to bigger and fewer but very powerful and successful. The translation of the first part of the verse would be as follows: "The rock hyraxes, a folk who is not mighty."

The dependent clause is totally linked to the plural subject of שְפַנִים, while the adversative wāw opposes what precedes it. The verb שׂים ("put," "set," "establish") is parallel to the previous verb כון (cf. Gen 41:32; 43:16; Jos 1:11; 2 Sam 7:12; 1 Kgs 2:24; Ps 74:10; 87:5). The locative בַסֶּלַע alludes to the habitual place of the subject, which is highly stable, protective and safe. The verb שׂים in relation to שְפַנִים differs from חֲקַק ("to cut in," "to carve" or "to dig in rock," cf. Isa 22:16) and presumably means "to put," "to set," "to nest" in an already existing rock or cave (cf. Num 24:21; Jer 48:28), while בֵּיתָם corresponds to the action of the verb שׂים and the locative בַסֶּלַע. The translation of the dependent clause would be:

468 The LXX reads here οἳ ἐποίησαντο ἐν πέτραις τοὺς οἴκους ("which make their homes in the rock"). The habitat of the grasshopper can be grass but also a rocky area. The Vg has here quae conlocat in petra cubile suum ("which make their den in the rock"). The Syr turns the Hebrew בֵּיתָם בַסֶּלַע into the plural to synchronize the entire segment and reads וּכְשֶׁאֶנִּיחַ בֵּיתָם בַסֶּלַע ("and build for themselves a house in the rocks"), while the Tg translates "and set houses for themselves in the rocks"). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60) reads similarly "ihre Wohnung auf Felsen baut" ("builds their house on the rocks"), while Hodgson (p. 87; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 461) reads the generic noun "house" in the plural like the Syr: "yet amongst the rocks do build their houses;" Ewald (p. 260, as well as Delitzsch, Commentary, 301) sees "und setzen doch auf Felsen ihre Häuser" ("and set their houses on the rocks"). Doederlein (Sprüche, 196, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 364; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 164; Sauer, Sprüche, 108; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 324; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 878; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) includes the noun בֵּיתָם in the action of the main verb: "aber sie bauen in Felsen" ("but they built on the rocks"). Murphy (Proverbs, 233) explains the noun בֵּיתָם as "but have their home in rocky crags."
“who set their home in the cave.” The translation of v. 26 as a whole is “The rock hyraxes, a folk not mighty but who make their home in a cave.”

The complex clause turns completely to the singular with a different syntax compared to the previous two verses, even though the accentuation is parallel with vv. 25 and 26. The negative existential particle אֵין here is in the service of the predicate in the main clause. That construct יְהַעַרַֹבָּה, with the preposition of purpose וְ and the noun with the definite article הָאַרְבֶּה concludes the main clause. The noun הָאַרְבֶּה is widely attested in the OT, occurring twenty-one times in the MT, and refers to the an “adult winged insect,” usually translated as an edible “locust” (cf. Lev 11:12), but regularly with the negative connotation of a systematic destroyer of natural goods (cf. Exod 10:4, 12, 13, 14, 19; Deut 28:38; 1 Kgs 8:37; Pss 78:46; 105:34; 109:23; Jer 46:23; Joel 1:4; 2:25) or as a metaphor for a numerous enemy (Judg 6:5; 7:12). The verse refers to a group class without a hierarchical social

469 The translation of Paul (Isaiah 40–66, p. 193) “Badgers are folk without strength, yet they make their home among the rocks” does not highlights the weakness of the animals and strength of their shelter.

470 As the LXX marks the parallelism between ἰσχύς (“the force”) in v. 25 and ἰσχυρόν (“powerful”) in v. 26, thus it probably establishes the parallelism here between γοργύλλαι (“grasshoppers”) in v. 26 and άκρις (“the locust”) in v. 27, reading ἀβασίλευτον ἑστιν άκρις (“the locust is without a king”). Similarly, the Vg reads regem lucusta non habet (“the locust does not have a king”). The Syr follow the same pattern as the Vg, but reads the subject in plural (건설 יְבַשֻּׁרְתֶּה לֹא לַחֹזֶה (“and there is no king of locusts”). The Tg follows the Syr closely and reads (건설 יְבַשֻּׁרְתֶּה לֹא לַחֹזֶה (“and there is no king of locusts”). Hodgson (p. 87) also reads “The locust, though they have no king:” Clifford (Proverbs, 264, as well Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 461; cf. Murphy, Proverbs, 233) has “locusts have no king.” Müntinghe (Sprüche, 60; Sauer, Sprüche, 108; Schneider, Sprüche, 163; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Plöger, Sprüche, 353; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Sæbo, Sprüche, 368) reads “Die Heuschrecken, die obschon ohne König” (“the locusts, although without a king” as do Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbi, 609), translating “le locuste, che non hanno re” (“the locusts, non having a king”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 196, as well as Ewald, 260; Ziegler, 364; Delitzsch, Commentary, 151; Frankenberger, Sprüche, 164; Gemser, Sprüche, 82) reads “Heuschrecken haben keinen König” (“the locusts do not have a king”) and Toy (Commentary, 534 so too Baraç, Le livre des Proverbes, 224; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 324) has “locusts—they have no king” as well as Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 878) “the locusts have no king.”

471 Williams’ Hebrew Syntax, §277.

472 Clines, Job 38–42, 1078.
The adversative wāw is placed here again with the habitual imperfect נֶפֶשׁ, (“when it goes out”), which corresponds to the previous dependent clauses in vv. 25 and 26. The verb נֶפֶשׁ is very rare in the MT (cf. Judg 5:11 and Job 21:21); its meaning would be “to set something in its proper position” (cf. Judg 5:11; Job 21:21) or “in order.”474 The noun חץ with the suff. of 3 ms refers to the individual positions: “every one” (cf. Gen 25:25; Pss 29:9; 53:4; Jer 6:13). Thus, in v. 27 the reference is to order without authority and the translation would be “The king does not exist for the locust but every one of them goes out according to its proper position.”

473 The LXX reads here καὶ ἐκστρατεύοις ἄρ’ ἐνός κελεύσματος κυριάκτος (“and march in order at one command”). Jäger (Observaciones, 220) maintains that the verb נֶפֶשׁ is bivalent here and can be governed by both נָהַשׁ and לְחֵץ. The Vg. similarly to the LXX, reads et egreditur universa per turmas (“and all go out in ranks”). The Syr has the verb חָצָץ (“to gather”) in the Ethpa’al part. mp and reads חָצָץ כֻּלּוֹ (“and they are all assembled as one”); the Tg does the same with its כֹּלֵשׁ (“and they are all assembled as one”). The BHQ apparatus, relying on the LXX translation, suggests emending פֵּן to פָּנְי (“ready for the battle,” cf. Garrett, Proverbs, 242). In light of the military matrix of the verb נֶפֶשׁ (“to divide”) instead of נֶפֶשׁ (“go out”), Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 74, as well as Kent and Burrows, Proverbs, 110; Scott, Proverbs, 180; Steinmann, Proverbs, 600) translates “ordnungsmäßig ihre Truppen teilen” “divide their troops in order” or “sie verteilen ihr ganzes Lager in regelmäßige Truppen” (“they distribute their whole camp into regular troops”), where לָחֵץ is in the accusative and נֶפֶשׁ is an Arabic loanword حصنمي for “etwas in verschiedene gleiche und Regelmäßige Theile teilen” (“divide something into several equal and regular parts.” Delitzsch (Commentary, 301, Toy, Commentary, 534; cf. Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 461) offers here “and yet they go forth in rank and file, all of them together.” Frankenber (Sprüche, 164; Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Schneider, Sprüche, 163; Plöger, Sprüche, 353; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 609; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 878; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) also reads “und ziehen doch alle wohlgeordnet aus” (“but nevertheless, they all move out in order;” Sauer (Sprüche, 108; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 224) translates similarly; “und doch zieht sie aus, in Abständen geordnet, zumal” (“and yet, it goes out exactly arranged in order”), while Ringgren and Zimmerli (Sprüche, 117) have “und ziehen doch alle in Gruppen aus” (“but nevertheless, they all move out in groups”). Ewald (p. 260) links the root נֶפֶשׁ with the Arabic hassa (cf. Thomas, 276; cf. Murphy, Proverbs, 233; Clifford, Proverbs, 264) with the meaning “keep order” and translates “und ziehen doch geordnet alle aus;” (“but nevertheless, they all move out all in order”), while Doederlein (Sprüche, 196, as well as Hodgson, 87) retains the Hebrew נֶפֶשׁ and reads “aber sie ziehen schnell ins Feld;” (“but they quickly move into the field”). Ziegler (Ubersetzung, 365; cf. Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 324) follows Doederlein’s translation (Sprüche, 196), adding the possibility of reading נֶפֶשׁ as חַתָּם “Schnurrrer oder Pfeil.”

474 Grätz (“Exegetische,” 442) proposes to emend the construction נֶפֶשׁ נֶפֶשׁ to נֶפֶשׁ נֶפֶשׁ—“geordnet” (“well ordered” or “armed”), comparing it with the construction נֶפֶשׁ נֶפֶשׁ in Num 32:17, which corresponds to נֶפֶשׁ נֶפֶשׁ.
Since in the preceding segments (vv. 18–20 and 21–23) as well as in the following segment of vv. 29–31, the third, especially the fourth thing refer not to animals but rather to humans, the common understanding of the lexeme שְַׂ֭מָמִּית in v. 28a as an animal may be questionable. The “lizard” is one of most flexible creepers and practically cannot be grasped with the hands. This is probably the reason why the Vg translates the term שְַׂ֭מָמִּית as “spider,” while some modern scholars try to narrow the meaning of lizards by translating the term שְַׂ֭מָמִּית as a slow-moving “gecko” or “salamander.” The particle preposition בְ is an agent of the passive construction: “touch with the hands” and here might not go with the Pi^±ēl שְׂתֵּפָה (“touch”) but rather with the Niph^±al שְׂתִּפָה: “with the hands the lizard can be grasped.”

The ability of the lizard to enter into the most intimate places of the king’s palace

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475 The LXX, introducing consecutive conjunction, reads καὶ καλαβώτης χερσίν ἐρειδόμενος, where the noun καλαβώτης corresponds to the Hebrew שְׂמָמִּית but also לְטָאָה (cf. LXX of Lev 11:30) and denotes a kind of “house lizard,” while the Hexapla reads the participle ἐρειδόμενος (“hold,” cf. Jäger, Observationes, 220) and translates “the lizard, squeezed by hands.” The Vg sees here a spider, reading stilio manibus nititur (“the spider, held by hands”). The Syr, like Greek, recognizes here a sort of lizard, and translates ܘܐܡܩܬܐܕܡܣܒܟܐܒܐܝ̈ܕܝܗ (“and a lizard caught by hands”) as does the Tg ואמקתא דמסבכא באידיא (“and a lizard caught by hands”). Wildeboer (p. 88) emends שְׂמָמִּית into שְמָמִּית to synchronize the Hebrew noun with the Arab sāmm, rendering it as “die Eidechse mit aussatzähnlichen Flecken” (“a sort of spotted lizard,” cf. Gesenius, 803). By contrast, Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60; Sauer, Sprüche, 108; Schneider, Sprüche, 163; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 324; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) translates the noun שְׂמָמִּית as “Die Gecko, die man mit den Händen greifen kann” (“the gecko, which can be grasped with the hands”), while Doederlein (Sprüche, 197) reads here “den Salamander, kann man mit der Hand fangen” (“the salamander can be caught by the hand”) and Ewald (p. 260, as well as Ziegler, Uebersetzung, 365; Delitzsch, Commentaries, 301; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 164; Toy, Commentaries, 534; Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Ringgren and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Plöger, Sprüche, 353; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 609) opts for “Eidechse tastet mit den Händen” (“a lizard, grasped with the hands”). Murphy (Proverbs, 233) has here the plural “lizards – you catch them with the hands” and Clifford (Proverbs, 264): “the lizard you can catch with your hands,” while Waltke (Proverbs, 15–31, 462): “lizard you can catch with two hands” and Longman (Proverbs, 517): “you can gather lizards in your hand.” Hodgson (p. 87; cf. Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 878), following the Vg, renders “the spider catcheth hold with her hands.”

476 Mühlu (p. 59–64), Böttcher (p. 30, §1371) and Grätz (“Exegetische,” 443) emend the Pi^±ēl שְׂתֵּפָה to the Niph^±al שְׂתִּפָה.
reflects a privilege that is highlighted in this verse.  

The feminine pronoun with the adversative wāw is the indefinite subject of the previous clause. The noun שְׂמֵמָה differs in meaning from מִלֶּךְ ("citadel," cf. 1 Kgs 16:18) or מִלֶּךְ ("acropolis," cf. 1 Chr 29:1), referring rather to a private house or royal residence (cf. 1 Kgs 21:1; 2 Kgs 20:18; 2 Chr 36:7; Ps 45:16; 144:12; Isa 39:7; Amos 8:3). The dependent clause serves to clarify the subject, מִלֶּךְ, giving it

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477 The Hebrew root שְׂמֵמָה ("be desolated") is regularly linked to an occupied territory that remains desolated and its dwellers led into captivity (cf. Gen 47:19; Lev 26:22,31,32; Num 21:30; 1 Sam 5:6; Pss 69:26; 79:7; Isa 49:8; 59:16; Ezek 27:35; 28:19; 36:3). In the Aramaic Poems from Eretz Israel of the Byzantine Period 70:4 (Sokoloff, DIPA, 557), the verb is connected to the killing of brides and grooms and the destruction of marriage. In 2 Sam 13:20 Tamar is called עֲשַׂמֵּת or "one who is enclosed in a house" or "desolated" and in Isa 54:1 there is a differentiation between שְׂמֵמָה ("an unmarried woman") and וְהִיא בְּהֵיכְלֵי מִלֶּךְ ("a married woman"). In addition, in Ezra 9:3, the term שְׂמֵמָה denotes a "desperate person" (cf. Ps 40:16; Jer 2:11; Lam 1:4). In the case of all three terms, the pronunciation i שָמֵם/שְׂמֵמָה could hint at the idea of a "captured woman," brought from a conquered land and closed up in the harem of the king. In other words, the term could be understood as an indefinite reference to a "concubine of a king's harem," which would correspond to the Hebrew term מִלֶּךְ in Esth 2:14 (cf. Esth 2:5–7). In addition, the construct מִלֶּךְ is also a term of possession or submission (cf. Gen 16:9), found only here without a suffix (cf. Gen 9:2; 14:20; 16:6; 35:4; 39:4; 43:12; Exod 10:25; Deut 3:2; 7:24; Jos 9:11; Judg 3:28; 1 Sam 14:34; 1 Kgs 20:3; Ps 37:33; Isa 22:21). Moreover, the indefinite personal subject is expressed by the verb שָמֵמָה, which as already noted in v. 9, refers to the conquering of a city or a prohibited relationship with a woman. In this regard, the construction מִלֶּךְ and the verb שָמֵמָה are also found together in Jer 34:3 and 38:23, and in both cases denote the "capturers" and "exiled people." Thus, the clause in v. 28a could be also understood as "taken woman that you have captured."  

478 For this Hebrew dependent clause, the LXX reads καὶ εὐαλώτος ὠν κατοικεῖ ἐν οἰχορόμασιν βασιλέως ("and which [can be] caught in the fortress of a king"). The Vg reads et moratur in aedibus regis ("dwelling in the home of a king"). The Syr renders the noun מִלֶּךְ in the emphatic plural: מִלְּכֵי מִלֶּךְ ("and dwells in the houses [which belong to] the kings") as does the Tg מִלְּכֵי נוֹאֶמה הָבֵיתָה דְמַלֶּךְ ("and dwells in the house of kings," cf. Sauer, Sprüche, 108). Müntinge (Die Sprüche, 60, as well as Hodgson, 87; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 462) reads here "und doch in den Königen Palästen wohnt" ("and yet lives in the king's palaces"). Doedelein (Sprüche, 197, as well as Ewald, 260; Delitzsch, Commentary, 301; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 164; Toy, Commentary, 534; Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Schneider, Sprüche, 163; Ringgeng and Zimmerli, Sprüche, 117; Plöger, Sprüche, 353; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 609; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 324; Meinhold, Sprüche, 504; Clifford, Proverbs, 264; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 878; Sæbø, Sprüche, 368) also reads "und doch ist er in Königs Palästen" ("and yet is in the king's palaces"), while Murphy (Proverbs, 233) renders "(you can catch them with hands) but in royal palaces."  

479 The term is also used for the Temple or "holy (most private) place of God" (2 Kgs 18:16; 23:4; 24:13; Is 44:28; Jer 7:4; 24:1; Ezek 8:16a). Cf. Block, The Book of Ezekiel 1–24, 285.
the meaning “who is in the private rooms of the king.” The Petuhah concludes the segment and opens the last one in vv. 29–33. The translation of the verse is as follows: “The lizard can be grasped with the hands but it is in the private rooms of the king.” 

The masculine numeral with its corresponding pronoun marks the indefinite subject, which is more precisely qualified by the following clauses. The independent pronoun emphasizes the following verb. Instead of the previous habitual verbs, this segment uses verbs of motion and progressive action. The verb מֵיטִּיבֵי is usually linked to its object to reinforce an action (cf. 2 Kgs 9:30; Ps 33:3; Prov 15:2). Since the object of the clause צָעַד refers to a “step,” “pace” or “move,” which can be right (cf. Prov 4:12; 16:9) or wrong (cf. Prov 5:5), the verb מֵיטִּיבֵי (“be good,” or “perform well”) in the Hiph'il plural participle construction מֵיטִּיבֵי signifies a reinforcement of the noun צָעַד (“step,” “firm footing,” cf. 2 Sam 22:37; Ps 18:37; Exod 30:7; Deut 5:28; 8:17; 2 Kgs 9:30), which, depending on its context in the following verses, 

480 Cf. Van der Weiden, Le Livre, 149.
481 The LXX reads the numeral in the neuter as τρία δε ἐστιν ἀ εὐδόκειται (“there are three who proceed easily.” The Vg reads similarly tria sunt quae bene gradiuntur (“three are who advance well”). The Syr reads the independent personal pronoun as the feminine plural מים (“there are three who have the ability to walk erect”); the Tg has the same in mp as the Hebrew: תלתא דארא בחרותו (“there are three who have the ability to walk beautifully”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60; cf. Frankenberg, Sprüche, 164) reads here “Drei haben einen feinen Tritt” (“three have a fine movement”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 365) reads the comparative “Drei Dinge sind sehr schön im Schritt” (“three things are very nice in their stride”), while Doederlein (Sprüche, 197) uses the superlative, reading “Drei haben den schönsten Schritt” (“three have the most beautiful stride”). Ewald (p. 260) translates “Drei dinge sind’s, die herrlich schreiten”—“there are three things, which stride splendidly”). Geiger (Urschrift, 62) instead sees here a satire about the high priest Alkimos and reads “Drei sind es die machen stolzen Schritt” (“there are three who make a proud stride”), while Hodgson (p. 86) translates “there are three who walk with dignity,” while Delitzsch (Commentary, 305; cf. BDB, 857; Murphy, Proverbs, 233) renders “three things of stately walk.” Scott (Proverbs, 180) reads here “there are three which stride proudly” and Waltke (Proverbs, 15–31, 462): “they are three creatures that excel in their stride.”
means “good stride.” The accentuation is repeated, as in vv. 18a and 23a. The translation of the first half of the verse is “There are three who have a good stride.”

The wāw adaequationis\(^{483}\) denotes, not a strict comparison, but, rather the clarification of the preceding term צָעַד. The same verb in the second clause with a similar object of the action is a repetition of the same idea, which expresses compatible things that are based on two linked things and do not go beyond four things. The construction of the plural participle and the infinitive of רָצַח (“to walk”) reinforces the preceding action.\(^{484}\) The translation of the verse is as follows: “Three there are who have a good stride encapsulated in four with a good gait.”

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482 The ordinal number is represented by the LXX which reads καὶ τὸ τέταρτον ὁ καλὸς διαβαίνει (“and the fourth who marches nicely”) and the Vg et quartum quod incedit feliciter (“and the fourth who joyfully marches”). The Syr sees the clear tautology here when it reads ܘܕܐܪܒܥܫܦܝܪܡܗܠܟܢ (“and four who walk beautifully”) as does the Tg ארבעה משפני וחלכים (“and four who walk beautifully”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60) also sees a disjunction with the previous phrase and reads “ja, vier einen schönen Gang” (“yes, four a beautiful walk”) as does Frankenber (Sprüche, 164): “und vier haben stolzen Gang” (“and four have a proud walk”), while Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 366) reads “das vierte schön im Gang” (“the fourth beautiful in its walk”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 197) uses with the superlative, reading “und vier den prächtigsten Gang” (“and four of the most magnificent walk”), while Ewald (p. 260) reads “und vier, die herrlich gehen” (“and four, who go gorgeously”). Waltke (Proverbs, 15–31, 462) renders “and four that excel in their movement,” while Geiger (Urschrift, 62) has here “Und vier gehn stolz einher” (“and four go proudly along”). Hodgson (p. 87) opts for “yea four who in their pace are majestic” and Steinmann (Proverbs, 600): “three things stride with majesty.” Delitzsch (Commentary, 305) translates “and four of stately stride,” while Sauer (Sprüche, 110) “und vier kommen rüstig vorwärts” (“and four advance stately”); and Murphy (Proverbs, 233) has here “four, stately in carriage,” while Scott (Proverbs, 180) reads “four which carry themselves with dignity when they walk.”

483 Cf. GKC, §161 a.

484 Cf. LaSor, §35.4232.
The subject לַיִּש in the noun גִּבֹּר and the affiliative בַבְהֵמָה constitute the nominal clause. The usages of the masculine noun לָבִּיא ("adult lion," cf. Gen 49:9; Num 23:24; 24:9; Deut 33:20; Job 4:11; 38:39; Isa 5:29; 30:6; Hos 13:8; Joe 1:6; Na 2:12) or the feminine לְבִּיָא ("adult lioness," cf. Ezek 19:2) phonetically correspond to the poetic usage of לַיִּש that with the adjective גִּבוֹר may refer to the "alpha lion" (cf. Job 4:11; Isa 30:6).

486 The masculine adjective גִּבוֹר which, elsewhere in the MT is only attributed to God and humans (cf. the analysis of v.1), is an exceptional anthropomorphism here, recalling the zoomorphism in 2 Sam 17:10, where גִּבֹּר (the "hero") is compared with לֵב הָאַרְיֵה ("the heart of a lion"). The particle ב of affiliation with the object of the definitive noun ההבמה ("the beasts") emphasizes the clause ("the hero among the beasts," cf. Gen 10:8), while the accentuation marks the close parallelism of vv. 25–28. The translation of the independent clause is "The alpha lion, the hero among the beasts."

485 The LXX differs from the Hebrew, reading the comparative σκύμνος λέοντος ἵσχυσε ριτησιόν ("the cub of the lion—mightier than [all] beasts"); the Vg has the superlative leo fortissimus bestiarum ("the lion, the strongest of the beasts"). The Syr reads here גְּנַּבְר 호ַמְנָכ ("the cub of the lion who is the hero of all beasts"). The Tg follows the Hebrew, reading גְּנַּבְר ("the lion, the hero among the beasts"); Ziegler (Ubersetzung, 366) also reads the superlative here "ein Löw der stärkste unter Tieren" ("a lion the strongest among the beasts") while Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60, as well as Doederlein, Sprüche, 197; Ewald, 260; Frankenberg, Sprüche, 164, Delitzsch, Commentary, 305; Sauer, Sprüche, 110; Plöger, Sprüche, 353; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 462) similarly translates "der Löwe, der Tiere Held" ("the Lion, the animal’s hero"); Murphy (Proverbs, 233) reads "the lion, champion among beasts." Hodgson (p. 87) translates "old lion boldest of beasts," while Scott (Proverbs, 180) renders "the lion, lord of the beasts." By contrast, Geiger (Urschrift, 62–63) sees here a grausames wildes Tier" ("a cruel wild beast") and translates as "Lajisch, ein Held unter schwachem Gethier" ("laish [lion] a hero among the weak animals"), while McKane (Proverbs, 663) renders "the lion, the ruler of the four-footed animals."

486 The Arabic word lait and the feminine ظُل ("lioness") share the same root with the Hebrew ישיל ("the strong one" or "lion-like") and Assyrian nešu ("lion") which hint at the lion not as one who hunts, but who is strong enough to protects its harem. Cf. BDB, 522; 539; Clines, Job 1–20, 110.
The conjunctive wāw opens the dependent explanatory clause with the negation לא, while the only verb of the sentence in the Qal imperfect שבוב ("turn back") hints at the verb ירא ("to fear") or גור ("be afraid"), which is common with the construction of מִּפְנֵי—פָנֶה (cf. Deut 1:17; Job 19:29; 1 Sam 21:13; 1 Kgs 1:50; 2 Kgs 19:6). The noun כל, in the construction מִפְנֵי—כל, recalls מִפְנֵי־אִיש in Deut 1:17 and in both cases expresses fearlessness: "not afraid of anyone on earth." The translation of the clause would be read as "who does not retreat before anybody."

487 The LXX translation here is ὃς οὐκ ἀποστρέφεται οὐδὲ καταπτήσει κτῆνος ("which neither withdraws nor kneels down before anyone"). The Vg reads ad nullius pavebit occursum ("who does not quake meeting anyone"). The Syr has לܐܘܕܚܠܐܘܠܐܗܦܟܡܢܟܘܠܐܒܥܝܪܐ ("and neither fears nor steps back from any beast") and McKane (Proverbs, 663) claims this sentence represents additional redactor's work, while the translation of Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60, as well as Doederlein, Sprüche, 197) follows the Vg, reading "von niemand weicht"("who turns back from no one"); Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 336, as well as Delitzsch, Commentary, 305; Sauer, Sprüche, 110) renders "er weicht vor nichts zurück" ("he turns back before nothing"). Ewald (p. 260; cf. Murphy, Proverbs, 233; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 462) reads here "und der umkehrt vor keinen" ("which before no one does step back") and Frankenberg (Sprüche, 164) has "und vor nichts zurückweicht"("and retreats before nothing"); while Geiger (Urschrift, 62) opts for "und weicht nicht zurück vor Alle" ("and does not retreat before anyone"). Hodgson (p. 87) renders "and who turned his back upon none" and Scott (Proverbs, 180) reads "yielding to no one."
The lexeme זַרְזִּי is a hapax in the MT and might hint at the onomatopoeic source of the animal’s call, *zr-zr*, or be a descriptive term that derives from the intensive form of the verb זַרְזִּי ("to press" or "to twist"), which in Arabic is used for "twisting the lip of a beast." In addition, the Assyrian root *zāru* has the meaning

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488 The LXX offers additional words here, reading καὶ ἀλόκτον ἐμπεριπατῶν θηλεῖας ἐυψίφονος ("and the cock strutting courageously around the female"). Byz, the Vg reads gallus succinctus lumbos ("the cock with the stamina") and the quadriliteral verb *שֲׁחֵּ֥ת* (cf. Sokoloff, SL, p. 399), reading פְּלַטֵּ֥ה מִשְׁנַתְּנַיִּ֥ם הַיְּשָׁ֣רָה הַיְּשָׁרָ֔ה ("and the cock that is proud among the hens," cf. Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 226), while the Targum has藏着בנרה זַרְזִּי ("and the cock that is proud among the roosters"). Grütz ("Exegetische," 443), based on Talmudic usage translates the Hebrew noun מָתְנַיִּם as a "bird," which corresponds to a "cock," while Geiger (Uebersetzung, 366) emends to Talmudic word פֶּלְטֶּה ("standing high," "standing proud," "strutting") cf. Scott, Proverbs, 180; Whybray, 420; Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Murphy, Proverbs, 233; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 462; Sarbo, Sprüche, 369). In this regard, Longman (Proverbs, 517) translates "the strut of a rooster." Hodgosn (p. 87, as well as Wildeboer, 88) understands the Hebrew phrase in the following way: "the cock strong in loins" and Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 880); "the cock (girded) of loins," while Clifford (Proverbs, 264; cf. Plöger, Sprüche, 353) reads "the cock preening itself," and McKane (Proverbs, 663): "the rooster lifting himself over the hens." Sauer (Sprüche, 110) reads here "Ein Hahn von guten Lenden" ("the rooster with nice stripes"). By contrast, Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60) reads here "Der nervigte Pferd" ("the timid [nervous] horse"). In this regard, Ewald (p. 260) writes: "Das Pferd welches manche neuerdings hier sehen wollen wäre nicht wie Löwe oder Bock sich allein mit Feinden misst, sondern immer nur geritten wird" ("The horse that some most recently wanted to see here, would be most unclear here, implying that it does not match a lion or a goat, measuring with its enemies alone, but is only ever being ridden"). Doederlein (Sprüche, 197), based on the Arabic word *zona* for an animal with rings and stripes on its lumbar region, proposes here "der wilde Esel" ("wild donkey"), while Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 366) offers a generic translation such as "der Ringlichte an Lenden" ("the beast with the rings on the lumbar") region that could be a "Wald-Esel oder Zebra" ("forest donkey or zebra"), which Delitzsch (Commentary, 306; Meinhold, Sprüche, 505) also supports, reading here "Lendenumgürtete" ("zebra" or "wild donkey"). Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez (I proverbii, 610) translate "il forte di lombi" ("one with strong loins"). Geiger (Urschrift, 62) reads מָתְנַיִּם מִתְנַשֵּׂא לַנַּדוֹרָה אֶלֶ֑רֶס ("Lenden sarsir oder Bock") ("the ringed sarsir or the he-goat"), seeing in "Landen sasir" a "Spießgeselle, der seinen Mut und Leichen bekundet, der geile und freche Bock" ("a courageous and stiff criminal who is describe as a horny and naughty he-goat"). In addition, Ewald (p. 260; Plaut, Proverbs, 307) sees here "das schmächt'ge windspiel" ("the frail greyhound," as does Oesterley (Proverbs, 280) who also gives the alternative military term מַלְאַ֥ם מֵעַן בָּ֥רָאשִׁ֥ים ("war-horse"), while Frankenberg (Sprüche, 164, as well as Toy, Commentary, 535) and Kent and Burrows (Proverbs, 110) claim "the text is undoubtedly corrupt," translating the verse only partially as (the cock, strutting proudly), "and he-goat and the king (against whom there is no uprising)."

489 The same onomatopoeic understanding can be found with the verb זַרְזִי, with the meaning "to sneeze" (cf. 2 Kgs 4:35). Cf. BDB, 284. In the languages of central Pakistan and northern Afghanistan (Brahui and Barushaki), the onomatopoeic pronunciation *rez-rez, buz-baz, girī-girī* denotes a wild goat merkhor (*capra falconeri*). Cf. Yelena Rakic, "Rescue and Restoration: A History of the Philadelphia 'Ram Caught in a Thicket,'" Expedition 40 (1998) 51–59.
“resistance,” while the Aramaic verb זַז means “to strengthen,”\(^{491}\) and the adjective זַז signifies “swift,” “brave.”\(^{492}\) The only possibility for determining the meaning of the vocable זַזְז is to keep the phonetic sound and descriptive root together. On the one hand, the onomatopoeic source of זַז-זַז could allude to the “whinny” of an animal. On the other hand, the descriptive words “resistance,” “strength” and “bravery” hint at a strong, sinewy animal. The dual מָתְנַיִּים is in a syntactical construction with זַז-זַז and is indispensable for the determination of the phrase. The word מָתְנַיִּים (“loins”) is regularly dual and, depending on the context, signifies “strength” or “weakness.” The girded loins describe a ready, armed, strong and victorious man (cf. Job 40:16; Ps 69:24; Jer 1:17; Ezek 23:15; Nah 2:2), while loosed or broken loins denote a weak and ultimately defeated man (cf. Deut 33:11; Isa 1:17; Ezek 21:11; 29:7; Na 2:11). In addition, since the word מָתְנַיִּים is regularly associated with an armed man (cf. Judg 3:21; Job 12:21; Ps 45:4; Prov 31:17; Isa 11:5; Jer 1:17; Na 2:2), the same word could also describe an animal with strong legs that uses them to fight or strike or are with stamina, which corresponds to an “alpha lion.”\(^{493}\) While the significance of the goat in ancient Israel was ambiguous, “wild goat” (1 Sam 24:2; Job 39:1; Ps 104:18), “chamois” (Deut 14:5), “leader of

\(^{491}\) Cf. Sokoloff, DJBA, 420. Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 74), on the basis of this meaning, translates the phrase as “Stark von Rücken” (“one of the strong back”), alluding to a “Pferd” (“horse”).

\(^{492}\) Cf. Sokoloff, DJPA, 182.

\(^{493}\) The royal cemetery in Ur contained an object that in 1927 the discoverer Woolley called a Ram caught in a thicket. It is a statue (two are extant: one in the British Museum, the other in the University of Pennslyvania Museum of Archeology and Anthropology) of a male goat—merkhor, reared up on its hind legs, while the forelegs touch two branches of a tree. The lower part of the goat, the hind legs and testicles are in gold as are the forelegs. The golden parts of the statue symbolize the strength and stamina of a he-goat and its libido activity. Cf. Leonard C. Woolley, “Excavation at Ur 1928–9,” The Antiquaries Journal 9 (1929) 305–48; Woolley, “Ur at the Chaldees: More Royal Tombs,” The Museum Journal 20 (1929) 7–35.
the flock” (Jer 50:8), “scapegoat” (Lev 16:8), the vocable זַרְזִּיר can be phonetically compared with עֲזָאזֵל, which is also understood as an intense form of the phonetic verb עָזַל or עָזַל (“to turn away”), i.e., the goat that departs or escapes. Taking into consideration the different perspectives on and references to goats in the MT and the phonetic relation with the Afghan local terms rez-rez, buz-baz, giri-giri (in the local languages of Brahui and Burushaski), which all denote the same wild goat, merkhor, as well as the etymology of the Semitic root עז (“strong,” or “swift”) and the Mesopotamian tradition of the merkhor as an exemplar of strength and power, the term זַרְזִּיר expresses the strong, swift goat “merkhor,” who, rising on its מָתְנַיִּם (“hind legs”), demonstrates the stamina of an alpha or dominant male animal. The relation between זַרְזִּיר (“markhor”) and תַיִּש (“goat”) consists in their common species, strength, fighting posture and proud appearance (cf. Gen 30:35; 31:10; 32:15; 2 Chr 17:11). Thus, the translation of the phrase would be “the rearing wild merkhor” (the wild alpha merkhor with stamina).

31a

In the MT, the particle conjunction או is a sign of an alternative or comparison and

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494 Cf. GKC, §30n; Hartley, The Book of Job, 222.
497 The LXX descriptively translates here καὶ τράγος ἡγούμενος αἰπολίου (“and the he-goat, the leader of the herd”). The Vg correctly has only et aries (“and ram”). The Syr translates גזי בריה דאצלא ב keyof (“and the he-goat who goes out among [its] rivals”). Zigler (p. 336, as well as Münzinghe, Die Sprüche, 60, Doederlein, Sprüche, 197, Hodgson, 87) sees here a “Widder” (“ram”) and Scott (Proverbs, 180) an “old ram,” while Ewald (p. 260, as well as Delitzsch, Commentary, 305; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 462) opts for “der Bock” (“he-goat”). Grätz (“Exegetische,” 444) emends the Hebrew construction או־תָיִש (“or he-goat) to וְתָיִש (”and he-goat”), while Geiger (Urschrift, 62) and Bertheau (p. 175) see in the Hebrew construct או־תָיִש the Arabic alternative conjunction ureed, reading it as “oder der Bock” (“or the he-goat”). McKane (Proverbs, 663; Lelièvre and Maillot, Commentaire 19–31, 324), postulating textual corruptions, suggests reading “the he-goat walking before the herd.”
regularly links related kinds of ideas, things and beings: ideas such as bad-good (Gen 24:50), life-ransom (1 Kgs 20:39); things such as silver-gold (Gen 44:8), field-vineyard (Exod 22:4), stacks of grain-grain in the field (Exod 22:5), tabernacle-altar (Exod 28:43); humans: man-woman (Exod 21:28), sons-daughters (Exod 21:6), boy-girl (Exod 21:32), king-general (2 Kgs 4:13); and animals such as ox-sheep (Exod 21:32; Lev 22:28; Deut 22:1), ass-ox (Exod 23:4; Deut 22:4), sheep-goat (Lev 1:10; 5:6), ass-ox-sheep (Exod 22:9), ox-sheep-goat (Lev 17:3; 22:27; Num 15:11; 18:7).\textsuperscript{498} The noun \( עֵז \) ("goat") in combination with the particle conjunction \( 
abla \) is connected only with other cloven-hoofed animals and always comes last in a list of small livestock. A similar situation is also found here, where between the “ruler” of animals and the “ruler” of humans, two related animals appear, where \( צִוי \) represents a “tame goat” or “tame alpha goat,” that might be called “the striker,”\textsuperscript{499} which is again in second place and the last mentioned on the list of animals. The horns of ungulates serve as weapons, while rearing up on their hind legs in competition or fighting demonstrates their power. The close relation between the two nouns would be as follows: “(The wild alpha merkhor with stamina) as well as the tame striker.”

\textsuperscript{498} The conjunction \( 
abla \) in v. 31 does not commingle wild and tame animals and thus the “mountain goat” (1 Sam 24:2; Job 39:1; Ps 104:18) or “climber from Moab” (Deut 14:5) do not go together with \( צִוי \) (“tame goat”).

\textsuperscript{499} The tame goat regularly protects its flock by striking or attacking everything or anybody whom the flock is not familiar with.
The subject גַּם with the waw consecutive concludes the sentence. The vocable קָם is a *hapax* in the MT and could be understood as a word from the root קָם (“rise”). A construction *לבּא עָלָי* is found in Ps 86:14, where it expresses the uprising of the wicked against the just (cf. Ps 124:2). The clause is unintelligible.

The Ziegler/Mühlau emendation (see the footnote) seems adequate here when read as “ומלך על עמו וב内马尔 עמו (“and the king rising among his people”).”

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500 According to Jäger (p. 220), the LXX reads the Hebrew text differently as √ קָם אֲלֶיךָ (cf. also the translation by Fox, *Proverbs 10–31*, 880) here καὶ βασιλεὺς διηγομένος ἐν θνηι—“and the king haranguing among the people.” The Vg reads *et aries... nec est rex qui resistat ei* (“[either the he-got] or the king when [somebody] opposes him”). The Syr follows the LXX, reading מֶלֶק מַסָּמַל הַכְּפִיָּה הַגָּדוֹל (“and the king haranguing among the people”); the Tg follows the Syr: מַלָּכָה מְנֶסָּא מַסָּאָר רַב מְסָּא (“and the king rising and haranguing among the people”). Ziegler (*Übersetzung*, 367), following the Vg translation and Arabic syntax, offers the emendation as follows “Der König beim Stehen seines Volks” (“the king on standing of his people”). Mühlau (p. 50) thinks that Zigler’s emendation should stand with the preposition ב and reads √ קָם אֲלָךְ (“the king rising among his people”). Bickell (p. 296) emends the clause as √ קָם אֲלָךְ (“and the king who stands for his people”), which Clifford (*Proverbs*, 264) reads “and a king going before his people.” Hitzig (in Bertheau, p. 175) sees in the lexeme אלְקָמָה the word אלְקָמַה as a cryptogram for אלְקָמָה (“God”) and translates it as “und ein König, mit welchem Gott ist” (“and a king with whom God is”). Hitzig’s emendation follow Ringrren and Zimmerli (p. 117, as well as Scoralick, *Sprichwörter*, 1256), reading “und der König der wie ein Gott auftritt unter seinem Volk” (“and the king, when he appears ahead of his people as a god”). By contrast, Dyssenheim (in Wilderboer, p. 89) reads the word √ קָם אֲלָךְ as אלְקָמָה and translates (“and the king in the company of thousands”). Longman (*Proverbs*, 517, as well as Garrett, *Proverbs*, 243 and Steinmann, *Proverbs*, 600) sees in the lexeme אלְקָמַה a band of soldiers and translates it as “army,” while Gemser (*Sprüche*, 80) emends the Hebrew phrase מַלָּכָה מְנֶסָּא מַסָּא as √ קָם אֲלָךְ and reads “beim Erscheinen unter seinem Volk” (“at appearance among his people”). Sauer (*Sprüche*, 110, likewise Gemser, *Sprüche*, 82) reads the emphatic √ קָם אֲלָךְ emending to √ מקָם עָדָו √ קָם אֲלָךְ √ קָם (“yes, elevated in [the midst of] his people”). By contrast, Murphy (*Proverbs*, 233) proposes √ קָם אֲלָךְ as √ מקָם (“and the king leading his people”). Müntinghe (*Die Sprüche*, 60, as well as Doederlein, *Sprüche*, 198), similarly to the LXX, also reads here “Der König wenn er in die Volksversammlung tritt” (“the king when he comes into the public assembly”). Ewald (p. 260, cf. Scott, *Proverbs*, 180; Barucq, *Le livre des Proverbes*, 226; Oesterley, *Proverbs*, 280 Waltke, *Proverbs*, 15–31, 462; Fox, *Proverbs 10–31*, 880) reads √ קָם אֲלָךְ as √ קָמַה Exterior √ קָמַה as √ קָמַה Interior √ קָמַה (“and a king who is irresistible”), while Schneider (*Sprüche*, 164) sees an unfinished sentence which Hodgson (p. 87) translates as “and a victorious monarch in the midst of his people.” Delitzsch (*Commentary*, 305) reads here “And a king with whom is the calling out of the host,” and Plöger (*Sprüche*, 353, as well as Saebo, *Sprüche*, 369): “und der König, wenn er vor seinem Volk tritt” (“and the king, when he steps out before his people”), while Geiger (*Urschrift*, 62–63) sees her a satire by Agur about the high priest Alkimos and translates “und König Alkimos ihm entsprechend” (“whom represents the king Alkimos”). McKane (*Proverbs*, 663) sees a parallel with the “he-got” and reads “and the mountain-goat standing up in front of his people.”

501 Delitzsch (*Biblical Commentary*, 310) disagree with Ziegler’s emendation, noting that “the king should be brought forward” as a head of the people but the chiastic form “among the beasts” in v. 31a and “among the people” in v. 31b matches well the context.
The particle conjunction אִם and the only Qal perfect of the 2 ms of נבל in the MT introduce a conditional clause. The adjective נָבָל was already analyzed in v. 22, while here the verb also denotes status and attitude. The meaning of the verb נבל is not far from that of the adjective נָבָל and, thus, has the meaning of “to behave shamelessly” (cf. the analysis of v. 22). The conditional אִם is used with the perfect נָבָל to euphemize its offensive meaning (cf. Ps 7:4; Job 31:9). In addition, the reproach attached by the apodosis to the ungodly person is mitigated via the conditional אִם. The Mêrêk on אִם־נָבַ֥לְתָּ shows a conjunctive connection with the following compound and can be translated as “If you have behaved shamelessly.”

502 The LXX has the predicate in the apodosis ἀτιμασθήσῃ (“you will be dishonored if…”), offering a descriptive translation with the subjunctives ἐὰν πρόῃ σεαυτὸν (“if you have satisfied yourself”), which Jäger (Observationes, 221) interprets in accordance with the later Talmudic בהתנשא (“be full from top to bottom”), while the Vg reads the verb in the perfect 3 ms et qui stultus apparuit (“and who appears a fool”). By contrast, the Syr utilizes the word שֶׁדֶא for an especially bad habit and reads שֶׁדֶא (“do not disobey”); the Tg has an Ethpolal from רום, translating the Hebrew as תתרורם לא (“do not be exalted”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 367; cf. Müntinghe, Die Sprüche, 60; Schneider, Sprüche, 164; Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Plöger, Sprüche, 353) follows the Vg interpretation and translates “Beginnst du eine Torheit” (“if you start a folly”), similarily Meinhold (Sprüche, 505) renders here “Wenn du töricht handeln wolltest” (“if you would like to act foolishly”) and Waltke (Proverbs, 15–31, 462): “if you will pay the fool.” Alternatively, Doederlein (Sprüche, 198) approximates the Tg’s translation with his “hast du aus Stolz” (“have you from pride”). For Geiger (Urschrift, 63), this is the ironical conclusion of the previous verses with emphatic conjunctions “Ach sei nicht niederträchtig wenn du dich erhebst” (“oh, is not despicable when you exult yourself”), while Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 324) introduce an interrogative clause here “as-tu agi avec malversation afin de t'élever?” (“have you acted with malfeasance to elevate yourself?”). Hodgson (p. 87) understands the phrase neutrally, reading “if you have done.” Steinmann (Proverbs, 600) approaches to the LXX translation and reads here “if you are such complete fool,” while Fox (Proverbs 10–31, 881) translates it in the light of the Tg’s interpretation: “if in arrogance you have acted vilely.”

503 The adjective nābāl is used in the wisdom literature of a special kind of fool: one who is arrogant (Prov 30:32), crude of speech (Prov 17:7). Spiritually and morally obtuse (Job 2:10), a scoundrel (Job 30:8)” and cites the translation of Isa 32:6 (NRSV): “For fools (nābāl) speak folly, and their minds plot iniquity: to practice ungodliness, to utter error concerning the Lord.”

504 Block (The Book of Ezekiel 1–24, 400) explains: “The adjective nābāl is used in the wisdom literature of a special kind of fool: one who is arrogant (Prov 30:32), crude of speech (Prov 17:7). Spiritually and morally obtuse (Job 2:10), a scoundrel (Job 30:8)” and cites the translation of Isa 32:6 (NRSV): “For fools (nābāl) speak folly, and their minds plot iniquity: to practice ungodliness, to utter error concerning the Lord.”

505 Cf. GKC, §159m.
The verb נָשָׂא occurs in v. 13 and, especially, in v. 21, where, in the first occurrence, it expresses the exaggerated turbulence of the earth and in the second occurrence alludes to an exaggerated human facial expression. In vv. 13 and 21, the infinitive of the Qal follows the imperfect. Here, the Hitpaʿēl infinitive with the particle preposition ב follows the verb in the Qal perfect in a temporal clause. The clause in the protasis presents the action that should be fulfilled. The accentuation of the 'athanāh shows the conclusion of the first half of the verse, which should be translated as “If you have behaved shamelessly, by exaggerating” (cf. Ezek 17:14 and Isa 54:10; Ps 89:29).

506 The LXX reads the Hebrew object as εἰς εἰρωφοσόνην (“in cheerfulness”), while the Vg renders postquam elatus est in sublime (“after [his] elevation”). The Syr reads דָּהַל וַיְעַל (“that you be not reproached”), and the Targum: דלא תתטפש (“no t to be stupid”). Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60) synchronizes the verse here with v. 33b, reading “oder rümpfst du die Nase” (“or you wrinkle the nose”). Ziegler (Übersetzung, 367; cf. Ewald, 261), following the Vg’s approach, sees the construction here as “eine Torheit aus Übermut” (“a folly out of arrogance”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 198) translates “eine Torheit begangen” (“caused a folly”), while Hodgsone (p. 87) reads “foolishly adverbially.” By contrast, Delitzsch (Commentary, 312) translates “or in devising,” and Sauer (Sprüche, 110; Schneider, Sprüche, 164; Alonso Schökel and Vilches Lindez, I proverbi, 611) opts for “im Sich-erheben” (“in elevating onself”) as does Meinhold (Sprüche, 505): “sich zu überheben” (“to elevate yourself”). Pflüger (Sprüche, 353) renders “in Überheblichkeit” (“in arrogance”), while Scott (Proverbs, 180, as well as Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 881) translates the compound as “If you have shamed” (also: “if you have made a rude gesture,” p. 182). Waltke (Proverbs, 15–31, 462) has “and if you are ashamed to do so,” and Gemser (Sprüche, 82, as well as Sæbø, Sprüche, 369): “wenn du dich geltend macht” (“if you present yourself mighty”), while Scoralick (Sprichwörter, 1256) renders “und dabei blamiert hast” (“and thereby [if you] disgraced yourself”).

507 Cf. GKC, §119b.
508 Cf. Williams’ Hebrew Syntax, §511.
509 Cf. Cooke, Ezekiel, 188; Ben Yehudah (“The Edomite Language,” 115) sees in נָשָׂא הַחַד the Edomite construct form “raising up yourself” and reads v. 32 “(If thou sink down) then raise thyself up (and if thou purpose evil, remiu quiet).”
The explicative wāw with the concessive particle אִם (cf. Amos 9:2–4) opens a concessive clause in the apposition. The verb זָמַה is consequential and demonstrates clarification, assurance and decision (cf. Prov 31:16; Jer 4:28; 51:12; Lam 2:17; Zech 1:6). The Qal perfect of זָמַה implies the shameless exaggerated acts expressed by the verb נָבַל in v. 32a. The accentuation demonstrates its dependence on the previous syntax in the protasis as well as that which follows in the apodosis.

The translation of the phrase וְאִּמ־זָמַה would be “although you already have exaggerated.”

Self-control is expressed in the phrase יָד לְפִֶּֽה (cf. Job 21:5) or even יָד לְפֶּּֽה (cf. Job 29:9). The phrase יָד לְפֶּּֽה has the same

The second dependent clause in the LXX expansively reads the Hebrew as καὶ ἐκτείνῃς τὴν χεῖρά σου μετὰ μάχης (“and [if] you extend your hand in a quarrel”) The Vg also offers here the subjunctive pluperfect 3 ms, reading si enim intellexisset (“if you truly have recognized”). The Syr and Tg opens the clause with the prohibition. Thus, Syr reads יָד לְפֶּּֽה (“and do not take off”) and Tg: יָד לְפֶּּֽה (“do not hide”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 367) translates “dachtest du nur auf Ränke” (“with the intention of shaming”). Doederlein (Sprüche, 198), following the Vg, reads simply “oder gedacht” (“or you thought”). Sauer (Sprüche, 110) renders here with an adversative wāw: “aber wenn du nachsinnst” (“but if you ponder over [it] later”) and Meinhold (Sprüche, 305) consecutive wāw: “und wenn du danach trachten würdest” (“and if you then would like to strive after it). Geiger (Urschrift, 63) reads here an optative אִם: “Ach sinne nicht auf Arges” (“oh, do not think on evil”). Oesterley (Proverbs, 280) renders here alternative אִם: “Or if you have thought evil,” as does Gemser (Sprüche, 82) “oder bei Verstand” (“or by reason”) and Sæbø (Sprüche, 369; cf. Plöger, Sprüche, 353; Scoralick, Sprichwörter, 1256): “oder ob du klug nachdenkst” (“or if you reflect wisely”) and Longman (Proverbs, 517): “or if you have been scheming,” while Hodgson (p. 87) reads the dependent clause as “by yielding to anger.”

While Doederlein (Sprüche, 63) views the conjunctions אִם in v. 32 as the conclusion of vv. 1–4), Grätz (“Exegetische,” 445) emends the second construction יָד לְפֶּּֽה and reads “Wenn du zürnst, dann יָד לְפֶּּֽה — “if you are angry, then place your hand over your mouth.”

As previously noted, the LXX utilizes two dependent clauses here with one main predicate with the future passive אִם יָד לְפֶּּֽה (“you will be dishonored if”). The Vg concludes the clauses with ori imposuisset manum (“clap your hand over your mouth”); the Syr reads יָד לְפֶּּֽה (“your hand on your mouth in quarrel”) and the Tg renders יָד לְפֶּּֽה (“your hand on your mouth”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 367; Müntinghe, Die Sprüche, 60; Doederlein, Sprüche, 198; Sæbø, Sprüche, 369) reads “Hand auf den Mund” (“hand on the mouth”), while Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 324) opt for reading יָד לְפֶּּֽה together as “As-tu comploté en parlant à voix basse” (“are you plotted, speaking in a low voice?”).
function as “to shut up” (cf. Job 5:16; Ps 107:42), and is the opposite of שָׂפָה פָתַח ("to open the lips and talk," cf. Job 11:5; Ps 39:10). A similar expression is also conveyed by the verbs רָדֵשׁ ("to be silent") or אָלֵם ("to be dumb," cf. Judg 18:19; Est 4:14; Job 33:31; Ps 39:10), with a wise decision or a safe choice and a good result (cf. Job 13:5; 33:33). That the mouth can lead to abomination, condemnation and every sort of trouble is stated in Prov 21:23: "who restrains his mouth and his tongue, keeps his soul from troubles".

The apodosis of the preceding conditional clause is here used without a conjunction, while the accentuation marks the phrase in the apodosis and serves as the conclusion of both clauses, which would read as follows: “If you have behaved shamelessly by exaggerating, although you already have exaggerated, then hand on the mouth.”

The last verse consists of three closely related and progressive clauses, where again a metalepsis reoccurs with the noun מיץ (three times; cf. vv. 11–14) and with the verb יוצֵי (three times). The graded specification of the main point conclusion in the last clause. The particle כִּי is additional, appositional and explicatory here. The

513 Bickell (p. 296) explains this verse as “lass sogar berechtigte, um wie viel mehr dummdreiste, Ansprüche auf Beachtung und Anerkennung auf sich beruhen, um dir das höhere Gut äusserer Ungeplacktheit und inneren Friedens zu bewahren!” (“let even the entitled, as it be impertinent, base claims for attention and recognition, for the greater good of external freedom and inner peace!”).

514 The LXX follows the Hebrew ἄμελελος γάλα καὶ ἐσταὶ βοϊνυρον (“press the milk and the butter will appear…”), as well as the Vg qui autem foritter premit ubera ad eliciendum lac exprimit butyrum (“who strongly squeezes the paps to draw out milk produces the butter”). The Syr reads כִּאָלֵם מֶשֶׁר וַעֲמָלָה מַעִית הָלַחְצָה ("from the fat of milk the butter goes out") and the Tg: בִּמְנִית מִיִּיךְ מַעִית חוּרָתָה ("for from milk goes out the butter"). Ziegler’s reading (Übersetzung, 367, as well as Sæbø, Sprüche, 369) corresponds to the Syr: “den Druck der Milch gibt Butter” (“thus, the pressing of milk yields butter”) as well as Müntinghe’s rendering (Die Sprüche, 60) “den wie aus dem Drücken der Milch Butter wird” (“thus, as from the pressing of the milk comes the butter”). Similarly, Hodgson (p. 87; cf. Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 463) reads “who churned cream, produced butter.” By contrast, Ewald (p. 261, as does Bertheau, 176) reads here “den, Druck der Milch bringt Käse” (“thus, the pressure of the milk brings cheese”), while Doederlein (Sprüche, 63) opts for “denn Milchzammendruck macht Geronnenes” (“thus, the pressing of the milk makes it clotted”).
construction \( \text{מִּיץ} \) takes the subject “constant pressure,” “crush, “churning”\(^{515}\) and the genitive. A causal clause with \( \text{כִּי} \) and the nomen regens \( \text{מִּיץ} \) with the nomen rectum of species\(^{516}\) \( \text{חָלָב} \) initiate the action of the final result, starting with the domestic example of “beating the milk.” The verb \( \text{יֻּוָּצִיא} \) (“come out”) in the Hiph’il is resultative and customarily imperfect,\(^{517}\) with the meaning “to bring forth,” “to pour forth” or “to produce” (cf. Lev 16:27; Deut 24:11; Prov 25:15; Isa 42:1,3) with its object \( \text{חֶּּמְאָה} \), which always occurs without the definite article (cf. Gen 18:8; Deut 32:14; Judg 5:25; 2 Sam 17:29; Job 26:17; Isa 7:15) and is found in combination with \( \text{חָלָב} \) (“the milk of sheep,” cf. Deu 32:14),\(^{518}\) \( \text{דְבַש} \) (“honey”) and \( \text{שֶּּמֶּן} \) (“oil” cf. 2 Sam 17:29; Job 20:17; 26:7; Isa 7:15) and, thus, refers to a thick milk product or “butter” (cf. Gen 18:8; 2 Sam 17:29), which concludes the clause. The Galgal on \( \text{מִּיץ} \) directed to the Zarqâ on \( \text{יֻּוָּצִיא} \) follows the causative action, which would be read as follows: “Because, butter goes out when churning the milk.”

\(^{33b}\) The \( \text{wāw} \) adequationis is part of the preceding causal \( \text{כִּי} \) and opens the second

\(^{515}\) The traditional preparation of butter in the Mediterranean basin is called “the beating of the milk” or constant pressure on the milk until butter appears. In late (cf. Wildeboer, 89) and modern Hebrew the same noun \( \text{מִּיץ} \) is used for natural squeezed juice.

\(^{516}\) GKC, §128m.

\(^{517}\) Cf. GKC, §107g.

\(^{518}\) The milk of sheep is nearly twice as thick as that of cows.

\(^{519}\) The LXX reads here \( \text{ἐὰν δὲ ἐκπεψεῖς ἑαυτῷ ἑξελεύσῃς ἀμμα} \) (“thus if you pick the nostril the blood shall come out”) and the Vg: \( \text{et qui vehementer emungitur elicit sanguinem} \) (“who violently blows the nose brings out the blood”). The Syr interprets the Hebrew as follows \( \text{ܘܐܢ} \) \( \text{ܬܟܒܘܫ} \) \( \text{ܐܝܕܟ} \) \( \text{ܥܠ} \) \( \text{ܚܛܬܐ} \) \( \text{ܢܦܘܩ} \) \( \text{ܕܡܐ} \) (“if with your hand you dig in the nipple the blood will come out”), while the Tg already anticipates the concluding sentence of the verse, reading \( \text{ואל תלבש וד;color=red} \) \( \text{לפי} \) \( \text{子どין דמא} \) (“and by retaining [cultivating] anger, blood comes out”). Scott \( \text{Proverbs, 182} \) thinks that this sentence is an added variant of the previous one, which should not be translated. By contrast, Ziegler \( \text{Uebersetzung, 367} \) reads “allein der Nase Druck gibt Blut” (“simple pressing of the nose yields
comparison that leads to the final conclusion. The nomen regens מִיץ with the nomen rectum אַּּ֜פֶַ֗יִּם expresses the action that precedes the causative conclusion. The syntax is parallel to the previous clause and reads as “the blood goes out when striking the nose.”

The words מִיץ and אַּּ֜פֶַ֗יִּם are related. The dual form אַּּ֜פֶַ֗יִּם could refer to a man’s face, but may also hint at the two nostrils that on an angry person dilate and constrict and thus present a visible expression or symptom of someone’s anger. God is characteristically אֶּרֶּךְ אַפַיִּם (“slow to anger,” cf. Ex 34:6; Num 14:18; Neh 9:17; Pss 86:15; 103:8; 145:8), and this may also be a trait of a man of great understanding (Prov 14:29). The “anger” of v. 33 is related to the “provocation” of v. 1, by which the final antipathy has been developed into וּמִ֥יץ אְַּ֜פֶַ֗יִּם or “the protest.” The composition of

blood”) and Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60): “und Blut fließt, wenn man die Nase drückt” (“and blood flows when a person presses the nose”). Similarly, Doederlein (Sprüche, 63) reads: “Und Nasedrücken bringet Blut heraus” (“and the pressing of the nose bring out the blood”), while Hodgson (p. 87) renders “so he who aggravated wrath will cause bloodshed.”

Cf. BDB, 60.

The LXX concludes the verse, reading εὰν δὲ ἐξελθῇς λόγους ἐξελέησονται κρίσεις καὶ μάχας (“thus, if you extort words, quarrels and strife will come out”), while the Vg renders et qui provocat iras producit discordias (“and who provokes anger produces discord”). The Syr utilizes here a paromoiosis between ד饧 (“blood”) and דיה (“judgment”), reading גחניא דאפי ניפוק דינה (“thus, from the quarrel of parties the judgment comes out”). The Tg translates in the same way as the Syr: גחניא דOnClickListener דינה (“and from the quarrel of the parties the judgment comes out”). Ziegler (Uebersetzung, 367) also reads the paromoiosis: “und Druck des Zorns gibt Zank” (“and the pressing of wrath causes a quarrel”), while Müntinghe (Die Sprüche, 60; cf. Wildeboer, 89; Sauer, Sprüche, 110; Oesterley, Proverbs, 280; Waltke, Proverbs, 15–31, 463; Fox, Proverbs 10–31, 881) renders “so entsteht Zwist aus dem Drücken des Zorns” (“thus, from pressing of wrath the strife comes out”) and Doederlein (Sprüche, 198; cf. Murphy, Proverbs, 233) opts for “Stoßen an der Zornigen gibt Hader” (“beating anger produces strife”) as does Geiger (Urschrift, 63; cf. Schneider, Sprüche, 164; Barucq, Le livre des Proverbes, 226; Alonso Schökel and Vilchez Lindez, I proverbi, 611; Gemser, Sprüche, 82; Sæbø, Sprüche, 369), reading “Und Zornerspressen erzeugt Streit” (“and pressing anger begets strife”). Hodgson (p. 87) reads “and he who provoked passion, mischief,” while Delitzsch (Commentary, 312) has “and pressure on sensibility brings forth altercation.” Steinmann (Proverbs, 600) renders “and pressing (one’s) anger produces a fight,” while Lelièvre and Maillot (Commentaire 19–31, 324) see the clause as unintelligible: “comresser… une forte colère donne un procès” (“compress… strong anger results in a trial”).
the clause is parallel to that of the previous two. The causal clause with רִיב has various functions in the Book of Proverbs. The noun רִיב is used in Proverbs as a term for public strife (cf. Prov 15:18; 26:17, 28), family disagreements (cf. Prov 17:1) or a servant’s insurgency (cf. Prov 30:33). Here, the master’s provocation causes the servant’s רִיב or “protest” against the ungodly social party (cf. Deut 21:5; 25:1; Judg 12:2; 1 Sam 25:39; 2 Sam 15:2, 4; Ezek 44:24). Since the syntaxes of the previous two examples have causative results (milk-butter; body-blood), the third concluding example has the same function, but does not concern nature or the human body but rather social provocations (cf. v. 1) and should be read “protest ensues when anger is provoked.”

The accurate translation of poetry from one language to another requires more than merely a literal understanding of particular lexemes, especially those that have a specific role in a peculiar segment. Once the syntactic roles of the lexemes in a poetic segment are grasped, contextualization is the next step because not only the words but also constructions, syntax, accentuation, diction and finally contextualization make up the elements of the poetry.522 According to Maurice Gilbert, every work of biblical poetry has to have a structure. To determine the structure of Proverbs 30 requires detailed examination of the lexemes, constructions, syntaxes and accentuations. Now, when the connotation, denotation and diction of the segments of Proverbs 30 have been analyzed and the meanings of the segments have been determined, the next step is to ascertain the structure of Proverbs 30. Only then will it be possible to comprehend Chapter 30 in its entirety.

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE STRUCTURE AND TRANSLATION OF PROVERBS 30

The structure of Proverbs 30 is remarkably difficult, not only because of the complexity of its macrostructure and microstructure, but also because of the formal and thematic features of its thirty-three verses. Analysis of the elements of the macrostructure occurs at the discourse level and can be depicted quantitatively by counting the cohesive ties of the ideas of the segments or genre-specific text structural elements presented by the numeralia that narrow the topics, moving from a larger idea to focusing on a particular matter.\(^1\) The microstructure includes examination of the linguistic elements at the word, sentence and discourse levels in particular segments, linked by contextual sequels or “catchwords, synonym-sequences, assonances, word-plays, repeated forms and thematic units.”\(^2\)

1. The Macrostructure of Proverbs 30

The macrostructure of Proverbs 30 is roughly based on the author’s two main thematic approaches. The negative thematic approach of the ungodly man is dominant from the very beginning up to v. 24, where this negative approach progressively shifts to the positive ideas of good examples (vv. 24–28), encouragement (vv. 29–31) and the cessation of sin (vv. 32–33). Furthermore, the three imperative warnings in vv. 6, 10 and 32 encompass the main ideas of the chapter, where v. 6 is a warning to an ungodly person and v. 10 a warning to a hypocrite, who in v. 15 is ultimately characterized as an “Ungodly Hypocrite” or “Leech.” The focus of Proverbs 30 converges in v. 17, which stands exactly at


the middle of the chapter, where the curse of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” occurs, while v. 32 offers the same “Ungodly Hypocrite” a means for the cessation of the sin.

The structure of Proverbs 30 is chiastic, with ideas that are energized with a shift from negative to positive examples and vice versa. The structure ranges over ungodliness, hypocrisy, a curse, good examples, encouragement and the cessation of sin as the only way out for an ungodly hypocrite.

The chiastic macrostructure of Proverbs 30 can be presented as follows:

A) Way in: The sin (v. 1)

B) v. 1a-b: The degradation of God’s role in the world

C) vv. 2–4: Discord with the creative order in the world

D) vv. 5–9: Disapproval of the unbalanced society

E) vv. 10–15a: Consumption of the “Godly Believer”

F) vv. 15b–17: Curse of the “Ungodly Hypocrite”

E’) vv. 18–20: Consumption of the “Ungodly Hypocrite”

D’) vv. 21–23: Disapproval of the unbalanced society

C’) vv. 24–28: Accord with the creative order in the world

B’) vv. 29–31: The affirmation of the king’s role in the world

A’) Way out: Stop the sin (vv. 32–33)

Two ways in and out (A, A’) frame the chapter, where, at the very beginning, the ungodly provocation of one who is obliged to maintain orthodoxy is mentioned. The degradation of God’s role in the world (B) looks ahead to the affirmation of and respect for everyone who holds a high position in society (B’). The discord with the creative order in the world (C’) points toward the accord of everything existing (C’). As the author approaches his main point, he intensifies the situation with his disapproval of
the unbalanced society (D) that is reflected in concrete examples (D’). Focusing on v. 17, the author further contrasts the consumption of the “Godly believer” (E) with the consumption of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” (E’). In other words, the focus of the curse is that the “Ungodly Hypocrite” must perish (v. 17, 18–20), and every ungodly person in society (vv. 11–14) who is destructive in his ideas and acts should be considered undesirable (F). However, as there is a way into ungodly hypocrisy, there is also a way out of ungodly hypocrisy, which is the way of the cessation of sin (vv. 32–33).

2. The Microstructure of Proverbs 30

The microstructure of Proverbs 30 follows the division of its chisastic macrostructure framed with the introduction and conclusion. The central theme of cursing the “Ungodly Hypocrite” is presented in v. 17, invoking all preceding verses in the first half of the chapter and accompanying all following verses in the second half of the chapter.

2.1: The Microstructure of the Introductory Statement (v. 1a)

Although the introductory statement consists of only a few words, its structure is formed by two dependent phrases, which constitute the introductory clause:

1. הבורי הַמַַ֫שָ֥א
2. בִּן־יָקֶֶ֗ה אָג֥וּר

The first phrase consists of symmetrical stress-units, as does the second one, and both create a symmetrical unit, which can be graphically represented as follows:

1. xx xxx
2. xx xxx
Since the lexemes דִּבְרֵי and הַמַּשָּׁא are generically related to “matters to say” and “things to judge,” respectively, the statement of the first phrase is complete: “the matters regarding judgment.”

The second phrase is the main phrase in the clause and contains the predicative subject and the object of the clause, where the expression בִּנֶּן־יָקֶּה seems to be more of a definition than a statement: “the Youth of the Observer (who was commanded by God).”

The provocation about the “matters” uttered by “the Youth” initiates the chapter’s introductory message, which has to be clarified and examined in what follows.

2.2: The Microstructure of the Degradation of God’s Role in the World (v. 1b)

The repetition of the subject indicates the opening of a new discourse, but also the continuation of the same matter that the introductory words briefly announced. The introduction of the discourse is long and complex. At the very beginning, the construction נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר shows a close relationship with the preceding בִּנֶּן־יָקֶּה. The “Youth of the Observer” who follows what is commanded and prescribed by God declares his own deviant attitude. The subsequent structure demonstrates the sequential development of the starting position set up in v. 1a:

1. נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר
2. לְאִיִּיתִּיאֵל

The accentuation of the complex sentence does not indicate direct speech, although some sort of citation would be expected, such as the Zarqā on הַגֶּבֶּר and the Galgal on לְאִיִּיתִּיאֵל. Since the construction of לְאִיִּיתִּיאֵל is based on the contraction of the syllables, the corresponding accentuation is omitted. The counting of five stress-units in the first sentence נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר clarifies the contraction of the provocation נְאֻם.
where the phrase consisting of five stress-units makes the syncopation a definition comprising four stress-units that sound like three stress-units.

1. xx xxx
2. xxx xx (in the syncopation xxx)

Thus, the author uses the repetition of the subject לְאִּיתִּיאֵל in נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר to determine and specify the ungodly statement, which will form the subsequent discourse:

1. This is the master’s provocation:
2. Ungodliness!

The repetition of the same definition, לְאִּיתִּיאֵל, can only be explained as a quotation by the author, who by repeating the definition of ungodliness expresses his wonderment at the ungodly provocation and, ultimately, his personal proposal for the sequel of the definition:

1. לְאִּיתִּיאֵל
2. וְאֻכָל

The syncopation of the first definition caused the shortening of the second definition, where the personal pronoun אֲנִּי would be expected in the sense of “then I am nothing.” However, the author of Proverbs 30 prefers to see here the definition of “nothingness,” moving the personal pronoun to v. 2, where in the first person he explains the real consequences of ungodliness and nothingness. Thus, the five stress-units of אֲנִּי would correspond to the five stress-units of אֻכָל, when אֲנִּי is moved to v. 2a as אָנ כִּי. In this regard, the structure of the units would be as follows:

3. אֲנִּי: xx xx x, in the syncopation לְאִּיתִּיאֵל: xxx
4. אֵל: xx xxx, in the syncopation אֻכָל: xxx

In this conditional clause, the main subject changes from the third masculine singular to the first masculine singular, with the purpose of reinforcing the consequence of the statement of “nothingness,” by
which the author enters into an argument, providing a rebuttal to the preceding ungodly statement. The first person dominates the segment up to v. 4, where the author returns to the reason for his previous explanation. For the first time, in v. 6 the author openly warns the proclaimer of the apostatic definition, thereafter immediately uttering his personal prayer to be freed from a similar temptation (vv. 7–9).

Prov 30:1 consists of indirect and direct speech, which can be represented as follows:

Indirect speech:

\[
egin{align*}
\text{הַמַָ֫שָ֥א} & \quad \text{דִּבְרֵֵ֤י} \quad \text{xx} \\
\text{אָג֥וּר} & \quad \text{xx} \\
\text{נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר} & \quad \text{xx} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Direct speech:

\[
egin{align*}
\text{לְאִּיתִּיאֵל} & \quad \text{in syncopation} \quad \text{xxx} \\
\text{לְאִּיתִּיאֵל} & \quad \text{in syncopation} \quad \text{xxx} \\
\text{וְאֻכָ} & \quad \text{in syncopation} \quad \text{xxx} \\
\end{align*}
\]

2.3: The Microstructure of the Discord with the Creative Order in the World (vv. 2–4)

From this symmetrical composition, the acceleration of the statements about ungodliness that expands to nothingness is established. After the introduction by the author of the ungodly man who causes dissension, the godly man articulates a consequent epistemological statement about human, which is the basis for the following consequences. The sequence of the statements could be presented as

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3 Cuppi’s opinion (p. 35) that v. 1b was developed in three different stages is unacceptable here because of the coherent structure, which indicates the originality of the verse.
Ungodliness

If ungodliness

Then nothingness

Having moved from ungodliness and descending into the realm of nothingness, which can symbolize pre-creation chaos, the godly believer is accelerating the idea moving upward through vv. 2–3 toward his main argument, which opens with the particle כִּי and two circumstantial clauses:

כִּי בָּעַר אָנ כִּי מֵאִּיש
וְלֹא־בִּינַת אָדֻ֣ם לִּי
וְלֹא־לָמַדְתִּי חָכְמָה
וְדַעַת קְד שִּים אֵדָע

According to the stress-unit count, the four lines of vv. 2–3 are divided into two parts. The first and last lines have eight syllables each, while the second and third have seven syllables each. The one כִּי plus the emphatic personal pronoun אָנ כִּי that link the statement אֻכָל וַאֲנִּי ("I am nothing") to וְאֻכָל ("then there is nothing" or "nothingness") in v. 1, and the three wāw that elucidate the circumstantial clause, with two in the negative and the third corresponding to the opening particle כִּי, can be represented as follows:

כִּי (8 stress-units)

וְ (7 stress-units)

וְ (7 stress-units)

וְ (8 stress-units)

From the starting point in nothingness pronounced by the ungodly man, the godly man starts to move upward, relating nothingness to humanity without mind, which cannot be called human. Now, with
two circumstantial clauses, the author presents the real problem: by focusing on “intelligence/knowledge” and “other human qualities,” there is no way to perceive “transcendental” or “divine things.” Thus, the acceleration of the author’s argument can be presented graphically as

The author’s intention of decelerating the ungodly statement to nothingness and accelerating the same statement from not human to divine is already obvious here and its symmetry is evident from the following structure:

A) Ungodliness  
   A’) No transcendental perception

B) If ungodliness  
   B’) If no knowledge and human qualities

C) Then nothingness  
   C’) No intelligence, not human
Given our idiosyncratic translation of v. 1 and the aforementioned structure, it seems that vv. 1–3 cannot be separated as two independent statements. The coherent structure of vv. 1–3 is well matched with the following v. 4.

The following v. 4 repeats some of the preceding material, but the quadruple repetition of the interrogative pronoun מִי is the opening lead-in to the further implicit accounts (Prov 30:11–14) and explicit numerical ones (Prov 30:7, 15b, 18, 21, 24, 29). While the first part of vv. 1–3 insists on the importance of God’s existence and, thus, his divine function among the people, in which humanity participates, the following v. 4 progressively explains God’s supreme authorship of humanity and the world, which humans, by their intelligence/knowledge and other qualities, are able to understand and acknowledge. The descent of God’s supreme action from heaven to the earth can be presented graphically:

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4 Cf. Lipiński, “Peninna,” 75; Sauer, Die Sprüche, 99.
6 The quadruple repetition of מִי must be taken into consideration because the setting of the theme and pronunciation follow the gesticulation characterized by the number four.
The Maqēphs reduce the stress-units in each line to the minimum:

מִֵּ֤י עָלָה־שָמַיִּם וַיֵרַד
מִֵּ֤י אָסַף־רוּחַ בְחָפְנָיו
מִֵּ֤י צָרַר־מַיִּם בַשִּמְלָה
מִֵּ֤י הֵקִּים כָּל־אַפְסֵי־אָרֶּץ

In a conceptual manner, the author expresses his theology of creation from the heavenly power through the water and wind toward the earth as the created place for human dwelling. At the same time, the author summarizes God’s creative authorship of the world (cf. Genesis 1). The author’s purpose is to present the paradox of the ungodly provocation, which directly impacts the existence of humanity and the world as the result of God’s creation. Thus, v. 4 is a biblical reference to or reminder of Israelite faith and religion, which will be more thoroughly expressed in the following verses.
Prov 30:4 cannot be taken as a self-standing verse because it creates a conclusion of dynamic thought started with v. 1 and elaborated in vv. 2–3.\(^7\)

The objects utilized in v. 4 exhibit the following chiastic scheme:\(^8\)

A) Heavens  
B) Wind  
B′) Water  
A′) Earth

The above chiastic scheme is characteristic of the following numerical segment with the formula \(A \leq B\) in vv. 15b–17; 18–20; 21–23 and 29–31, but already here the symmetrical scheme of the couplets AA′ and B′B emerges, where A and A′ present the uttermost extremities or realities, while B and B′ as two heavenly elements that also have an impact on the earth are encapsulated between them. Thus, although the numerical chiastic formula \(A \leq B\) (“three encapsulated in four”) is not explicitly placed in v. 4, it is assumed and can be represented as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{[A] Three] } & \quad \text{B) Heavens} \\
& \quad \text{C) Wind} \\
& \quad \text{C′) Water} \\
& \quad \text{B′) Earth} \\
\text{[A′) Four]} & \quad \text{[A′] Four]}
\end{align*}
\]

Even though the enclosed chiastic formula \(A \leq B\) is clearly visible in v. 4, the author’s intention is to portray a descent from the extreme heaven toward the ultimate earth. The descending scheme can be represented as follows:

---

\(^7\) Van Leeuwen’s survey (“The Background…,” 120–21) of the widespread ancient theory of the heavenly journey of the human and divine figures does not correspond to the intention of the author of Proverbs 30 (see comment in Chapter Four of this dissertation).

\(^8\) For the chiastic schemes and chiastic usages in the Bible, see A. Di Marco, *Il chiasmo nella Bibbia* (Turin: RiProp; 1980).
This descending movement can also be called the author’s *catabatic scheme*, which had already been demonstrated in v. 1. Here, in v. 4, the descending direction from the heavens to the earth through the heavenly wind, which creates the clouds with water that fall upon the earth, corresponds to the ascending pattern of vv. 2–3. This can be called an *anabatic scheme*, where the heavens of v. 4 correspond to the transcendental perception of v. 3, while the “wind” and “water” of v. 4 correspond to the “intelligence/knowledge” and “human qualities” of v. 3, and the “earth” of v. 4 corresponds to the human body without spirit or to the “creature without a mind” in v. 2. Thus, the dependence of vv. 2–3 to v. 1 as well as on v. 4 serves here as a bridge for the theme of Prov 30:1–4. The dependence of vv. 2–3 on v. 4 can be presented graphically:

Since vv. 2–3 correspond to v. 4, the chiastic formula $A \leq B$ can also be found here:
A) Human without mind (v. 2)
B) Knowledge (v. 3a)
B’) Human qualities (v. 3b)
A’) Transcendental perception (v. 3c)

Two totalities in the extreme diagonal, one a human without a mind and other a human with
divine perception (B, B’), embrace two exclusively human traits (C, C’), accordingly.

Since v. 4 insistently repeats the interrogative pronouns מִי four times, the aforementioned
structure of vv. 2–3 and v. 4 can also be extended to the number four and presented in a chiastic manner:

4) Transcendental perception (v. 3c)  4’) The heavens (v. 4d)
3) Human qualities (v. 3b)  3’) Water (v. 4c)
2) Knowledge (v. 3a)  2’) Wind (v. 4b)
1) Human intelligence (v. 2)  1’) Earth (v. 4a)

Even though there is not the same number of stress-units in the lines of the segment of vv. 1–4,
the structure formed by the introductory and concluding particle כִּי, which includes two uses of the
negating particles לא; two interrogative pronouns מַה; and four interrogative pronouns מִי creates a
symmetric unit. Thus, the chiastic structure of vv. 2–3 corresponds to the chiastic structure of v. 4, which
together may be presented in the following scheme:

... כִּי v. 2a
... לא ... לא v. 2b and 3a
... מַה ... מַה ... מַה v. 4a-d
... מִי ... מִי ... מִי v. 4e
... מִי v. 4f

2.4: Microstructure of the Disapproval of the Unbalanced Society in vv. 5–9

The two מַה in v. 4e–f link up the following two things in vv. 7–9. The author, starting again from
the base of the unpronounceable name of God and moving to the treatment of God’s revelation through
his word in vv. 5–6, includes a personal prayer against the unbalanced society in vv. 7–9.
God’s name opens (אֱלֹהַּ) and concludes (אֱלֹהַּ) the microstructure of vv. 5–9. The occurrence of God’s name in v. 5 is used deliberately in order to establish the matrix of God’s authorship of the world and function among the people. The contradiction between the primal announcement or provocation of negating God in v. 1 and the theoretical explanation of the questioning subject in v. 4 is clarified by the announcement or definition of God’s revealing word to humanity. Thus, the thesis נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר (“the [false] provocation of the Youth”) collides now with כָּל־אִּמְרַת אֱלוֹהַּ (“every [truthful] announcement of God”) in v. 5, while as the “announcement of God” in v. 6 also contrasts with כָּל כְּנֶני as the “matters of the Youth” in v. 1. Likewise, the thesis לאaskan (“ungodliness”) in v. 1 clashes with אלה (“God, of course!”) in v. 5 and clarifies the message in v. 9 with its אלה (condemnation of sin). In addition, besides its close relation to v. 4, with v. 5 serving as the answer to the question “who is that mighty person?” by its composition and function, v. 5 is also incorporated into vv. 2–3, providing a reason to believe in God’s pronouncement or revelation as protection from every source of doubt and misinterpretation or negation of his existence. While v. 5 functionally corresponds to vv. 2–3, vv. 7–9 correspond to v. 4. God’s creative action, as his reaction to the ungodly thesis in v. 4 is also presented as the disapproval of unbalanced society in vv. 7–9. The prohibitions and prayers are in reaction to the action of God’s word in v. 5, which can be represented graphically:

1. The (false) provocation of the Youth
   A) No God! (v.1)
   B) Then follows (vv. 2–3)

2. True announcement of God
   A’) God of course! (v. 4)
   B’) Then follows (v. 5–6)

The prayer in the segment 5–9 is framed within the proper name אלה in vv. 5 and 9, while the first נְאֻם in v. 6 is parallel to the second נְאֻם in vv. 7–9 (A). The second נְאֻם in vv. 7–9 seems to be

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9 Cf. Kovacs, “Is There a Class-Ethic?” 180. The insertion of the tetragramaton יהוה in v. 9 suggests an additional elaboration and work on the segment of vv. 5–9.

10 Cf. U. Skladny, Die ältesten Spruchsammlungen, 71.
Additionally developed into two הָּ in vv. 7–8 and two פֶּן in v. 9 (B). According to the microstructure of vv. 5 – 9 it seems that poetic material presented in the following graphic as B is additionally inserted into and well suited to poetic material A:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>→</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>v. 5: Every announcement of God is appropriate (B: He is life-saving armor for those protected by him)</td>
<td>אָלַּמְרַת אֱלֹהַּ צְרוּפָה אֱלוֹהַּ כָּל־אִמְרַת אֱלֻ֣וֹהַּ צְרוּפֵָ֑ה מָגֵ֥ן הְֶּ֜וּא לִַֽח סִ֥ים בִֽוֹ׃</td>
<td>אָלַּמְרַת אֱלֹהַּ צְרוּפָה אֱלוֹהַּ כָּל־אִמְרַּ֣ת אֱלֻ֣וֹהַּ צְרֻפֵָּ֑ה מָגֵ֥ן הְֶּ֜וּא לִַֽח סִ֥ים בִֽוֹ׃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 6: Do not distort his words lest he reprove you (B: and you would prove yourself to be deceptive)</td>
<td>אלַּמְרַת אֱלוֹ֣וֹהַּ פֶּן־יוֹכִּיחַ בְךָ פֶּן־יוֹכִִּ֖יחַ בְךָ וְנִּכְזִָֽבְתָ׃</td>
<td>אלַּמְרַת אֱלוֹ֣וֹהַּ פֶּן־יוֹכִִּ֖יחַ בְךָ וְנִּכְזִָֽבְתָ׃</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 7: Two I ask you from you. Do not withhold [then] from me before I die</td>
<td>שְָ־וְא וִּֽדְבַר־כָזַָ֡ב הַרְחִֵ֬ק מִּמֶֶּ֗נִּי רֵֻ֣אש וַָ֭ע שֶּר</td>
<td>שְָ־וְא וִּֽדְבַר־כָזַָ֡ב הַרְחִֵ֬ק מִּמֶֶּ֗נִּי רֵֻ֣אש וַָ֭ע שֶּּ֗ר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. 8: Do not curse me with heresy and deceit (B: misery and abundance. Bless me with suitable providence concerning myself)</td>
<td>פֶּ֥ן אֶּשְׂבַַ֙ע׀ וְכִּחַשְתִּי  וְאָמֶַ֗רְתִּי מִ֥י יְהַ֫וָ֥ה וּפִֶּֽן־אִּוָּרֵ֥ש וְגָנֵַ֑בְתִּי</td>
<td>פֶּ֥ן אֶּּֽשְׂבַַ֙ע׀ וְכִּחַשְתִּי  וְאָמֶַ֗רְתִּי מִ֥י יְהַ֫וָ֥ה וּפִֶּֽן־אִּוָּרֵ֥ש וְגָנֵַ֑בְתִּי</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>And thus desecrate the name of God</td>
<td>לָפֶּשֶׁתִּי שֵּֽם אֱלֹהִּי</td>
<td>לָפֶּּשֶׁתִּי שֵּֽם אֱלֹהִּי</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thus, the construction of vv. 7–9 is complex and embodied in the two prohibitive הָּ together with the two consequential פֶּן in v. 9. Thus, the structure of vv. 7–9 is:

אל
אָל
פֶּן

The particles הָּ and פֶּן in vv. 7–9 forms the structure, beginning with v. 7aβ and continuing through 8b and 9a to 9b, to create the unit’s spine with the pronominal suffixes in the first singular and the verbs in the first singular forming the sentences within the corpus.
The pronominal suffixes show the curse that should be removed from the “Godly Believer” (vv. 7a – 8b), lest the negative dominating conditions expressed by the verbs in v. 9 bring him closer to the destiny of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” and ungodly society:

אַל תִּתֶּן לִּי וְגָנַבְתִּי וְכִּחַשְתִּי
אַל תִּפֶּן מִמֶּנִּי הַטְרִֶ֗נִּי וְתָפֶַ֗שְׂתִּי
אַל אֵםֶ֗רי אָמֶַ֗רְתִּי

In vv. 7–9, Sauer (Die Sprüche, 101) wrongly inserts the numeral “Drei” (“three”) but, in fact counts four: “Trug, Lüge, Armut und Reichtum.” The proximity of the account (“two, three or four”) does not seem to be the intention of the author. The mention of misery and abundance is a merism under the same presumption of a curse.

The entire petition seems developed and set between the two symmetrical vv. 5 and 10, with the enclosed nouns that follow the spiral of the negation אַל in vv. 6 and 7 and the conditional פֶּן in vv. 9 and 10:

v. 6 ... אַל ... פֶּן
v. 7 ... אַל
v. 8a ... שָוְא דְבַר־כָזָב
v. 8a ... רֵיש וָע שֶּר
v. 8b ... פֶּן
v. 9 ... פֶּן
v. 10 ... אַל ... פֶּן

2.5: The Microstructure of the Consumption of the Godly Believer in vv. 10–15a

The structure of vv. 5–9 is coherent with that of vv. 10–15a. Two אַל and two פֶּן are used in a cause-effect style about the relation God-man in vv. 7–9 and lord-servant in vv. 11–15a. In addition, the first disapproval is addressed to the “Youth” so as to defend the statutes of God, while the second is addressed to the “Youth” to defend the “Godly Believer.”
In the relationship God-man or godly-social in vv. 7–9, the numeral two is explicitly mentioned, while in the relationship oppressor-oppressed in vv. 11–14, the numeral four is implied by the sequential repetition of the noun. Thus, the number two opens the first explicit numerical segment in Proverbs 30, avoiding the personal curse in v. 9b but announcing the curse of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” in vv. 11–14. Two particles, אַל and פֶּן in vv. 7–9, are repeated with a single אַל and פֶּן in v. 10. In vv. 7–9, the pronominal suffixes, as well as the prepositional suffix יָוִי and the verbal suffixes in first singular, govern the structure, while in v. 10–14 the noun דור in the singular forms the following structure:

Verse 10 uses the same particles found in the structure of vv. 7–9, with the additional quadruple generation of vv. 11–14, and changes from the first person singular to the third person singular. The concluding imperatives recall the prohibition of v. 10, where אַל and פֶּן additionally introduce the “Leech” with the particle יִ with a presumption of the prohibition in v. 10, the explanation in vv. 11–14 and the conclusion in vv. 15a.
It seems that the segments of vv. 5–9 and 10–15a with the particle of prohibition אַל and the consequential פֶּן are embraced between the parentheses of the number two in vv. 7 and 15, where the first number two emphasizes the disapproval and way of righteousness via the correct direction from top to bottom, while the second number two demonstrates the way of wickedness and sin reflected in the opposite, inappropriate direction. At the same time, both schemes are constructed of four elements:

\[ \text{שְנַיִּים} \rightarrow \downarrow \text{v. 7a} \]
\[ \text{אַל} \]
\[ \text{7aβ} \]
\[ \text{פֶּן} \]
\[ \text{8b} \]
\[ \text{9a} \]
\[ \text{9b} \]

The composition of the four דוֹר is functional within the chiastic scheme, which is utilized by the author in comparing different kinds of people:

A) Those who curse their closest kin (v. 11)
B) Those with unclean eyes (v. 12)
B’) Those with malicious eyes (v. 13)
A’) Those who destroy the neediest (v. 14)

Even though there is no direct use of the chiastic formula A ≤ B, the enclosed couplet scheme is obvious in vv. 11–14, where B and B’ represent the final action of the problematic characters in society, while C and C’ restrict their characteristics.\(^\text{11}\)

\[ \text{[A] Three} \]
\[ \text{B) Those who curse their closest kin (v. 11)} \]
\[ \text{C) Those with unclean eyes (v. 12)} \]
\[ \text{C’) Those with malicious eyes (v. 13)} \]
\[ \text{B’) Those who destroy godly believers (v. 14)} \]
\[ \text{[A] Four} \]

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\(^{11}\) Sauer (p. 103) is right to include the numerical formula three and four here, while by the same pattern can also be included in v. 4.
However, the final intention of the author is not only to present the chiastic scheme but, even more, to reach a specific conclusion with v. 15a. The author starts with the two not reprobate דֹּר, which are liable to the death penalty (cf. analysis of 11α) or possible excommunication (cf. analysis of 12α), while progressively moving to the last two דֹּר of vv. 13–14, where v. 13 additionally explains v. 12 and v. 14 as the continuous behavior of the sinner who transgresses God’s commandment as represented in v. 11. These sins: one starting or cursing in v. 11 and the other destroying in v. 14, are presented as the two suckers of the “Leech,” which radically destroy or suck righteousness from the earth:

\[ \text{שְנַיִּם} \rightarrow v. 15a \]

\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 11 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 12 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 13 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 14 \]

From v. 7 up to verse 15a, the chiastic structure in vv. 11–14 is embodied into the numeral two, such that both structures are embraced by the number two:

\[ \text{שְנַיִּם} \rightarrow v. 15a \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 11 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 12 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 13 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 14 \]

In this regard, the structures of vv. 5–9 and 10–15a seem coherent and compatible, with the focus on v. 10, here again with one אַל and one פֶּן:

\[ \text{שְנַיִּם} \rightarrow v. 15a \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 11 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 12 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 13 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 14 \]

\[ \text{שְנַיִּם} \rightarrow v. 15a \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 11 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 12 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 13 \]
\[ \text{דוֹר} \]
\[ v. 14 \]
Focusing the four דָּרוֹת with the example of the two parts of the “Leech,” the author may include all the negative persecutions of the violation of God’s word in vv. 5–6. Thus, besides the four דָּרוֹת of wickedness in vv. 11–14, the “apostasy/heresy” and “curse of misery and abundance” of vv. 7–8 are also included here and may refer to the “two things” of v. 7–8:

A) Two things
B) Heresy and deceit v. 8a
C) Misery and abundance v. 8b
C’) Suck v. 15b
B’) Suck v. 15b
A’) Two suckers of the “Leech” v. 15a

Two things that correspond to the two suckers of the “Leech” (A, A’) in a chiastic manner embrace the condition of apostasy and heresy (B) that leads to consumption and destruction (B’) as well as the curse of misery and abundance (C) that leads to the destruction represented by the sucking imperative (C’).

Even though the author of Proverbs 30 prefers to use the chiastic formula A ≤ B explicitly only in the following material of vv. 15b–31, he already used the chiastic formula implicitly in vv. 2–3, 4 and 11–14.

2.6: The Microstructure of the Curse of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” in vv. 15b–17

The capsule of death and capsule of life in vv. 15b–16 with the earth and fire form a chiastic and coherent structure:
A) Three (v. 15b)

B) Death (v. 16a)

C) Life (v. 16α)

C) Earth (v. 16b)

B’) Fire (v. 16β)

A’) Four

The chiastic formula links two human conditions with two natural elements. Death is linked with fire (B,B’) because both are unsatisfied and consuming. By contrast, life and the earth (C,C’) are compatible for living beings and one cannot exist without another. In addition, life presupposes the earth and the earth needs life. However, both the capsule of life or a woman’s womb can be restrained or sterile and, thus, be represented without purpose as well as the earth without water, which is useless.

The structure of v. 17 presupposes the chiastic structure of vv. 11–14, where “eye” stands for “generation” as its synonym. The concluding example of the raptors’ family is opposed to the human family as its consummator and terminator:

A) Father (v. 17a)

A’) Mother (v. 17αa)

B) Raptors (v. 17γ)

B’) Chicks (v. 17αδ)

The chiastic formula $A \leq B$ encapsulates vv. 15b–16 and goes together with v. 17 as a concluding statement about wicked generations. Thus, the content of v. 11–14 is summarized in v. 17, where after the repetition of v. 11, the list of vv. 12–14 is presupposed, i.e., “pure eyes” of v. 12, “arrogant eyelids” of v.

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13 and “teeth like knives” in v. 14. In addition, vv.15b–17 may correspond to the previous vv. 11–15a. Thus, the first דוגר may correspond to the “capsule” of Sheol/life for dead/cursed people. Further, the דוגר that corresponds to human hypocrisy goes together with the uncontrolled fire, and the דוגר that expresses arrogance corresponds to the earth without water. On the other hand, the capsule of death and life may also correspond to the nesting raptors, which kill to enable their living chicks to survive. The earth without water and fire without control may correspond to the gluttony of the raptors’ chicks. In this regard, v. 17 is not only a reinforcement of v. 16 but, above all, the central and main point of the chapter, where in fact everything not in accord with God’s words and precepts turns to a curse and extermination. In other words, the consumption of the “Godly Believer” by the “Ungodly Hypocrite” is parallel with the consumption of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” by the curse.

The author of Proverbs 30 imbues vv. 11–17 with the following intention:

v. 11 – cursing the parents
hypocrisy of the ungodly person v. 12
arrogance of the wicked v. 13
consumption of the godly person v. 14

Like a sucking “Leech” is comparable to:
v. 15
 capsule of death/life v. 16
earth without water v. 16b
fire without control v. 16b

v. 17 – cursing of the parents

The chiastic formula A ≤ B, which encloses or encapsulates the message between the numbers, is a pattern within the structure of Proverbs 30. The link between the preceding material of Proverbs 30 and the following verses is obvious in the close relationship between the cursing of parents and all godly believers in v. 11ff. and v. 17.

The smooth structure of the first half of Proverbs 30 can already be represented as follows:

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15 The structure of v. 16 is formed by two alternative wâws: שָׂאַל אוֹ לָשְׁנַה/אֶרֶץ? Está (whether life or death/earth or fire).
Humans without mind (v. 2)

Knowledge (v. 3a)

Human qualities (v. 3b)

Transcendental perception (v. 3c)

The heavens (v. 4d)

Water (v. 4c)

Wind (v. 4b)

Earth (v. 4a)

Two (v. 7a)

Do not (v 7aβ)

Do not (8bα)

Lest (v. 9a)

Lest (9b)

Do not, lest (v. 10)

Generation (v. 11)

Generation (v. 12)

Generation (v. 13)

Generation (v. 14)

Two (v. 15)

Three (v. 15b)

Capsule of death (v. 16a)

Capsule of life (v. 16α)

Earth without water (v. 16b)

Fire without control (v. 16bα)

Father (v. 17a)

Mother (v. 17αα)

Raptors (v. 17αγ)

Chicks (v. 17aδ)

Four (v. 15b)
2.7: The Microstructure of the Consumption of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” in vv. 18–20

The pattern of the explicit numerical formula \( A \leq B \) governs the structure of the segment in vv. 18–20. The verbs הָאָסַע and יָדַע are compatible with the idea of disjunction in vv. 18–20; 21–23, which is reinforced with the second verb: הָאָסַע ≤ יָדַע. The disjunctio presents four different characters with their four determinations:

| Scavenger ↘ | Serpent ↘ | Ship ↘ | Sky ↗ | Rock ↗ | Sea ↗ | Impure “Rake” → Pure girl |

The author uses a quite similar approach here to that found in v. 4, where the starting point was also the high heavens. Here, as well as in v. 4, the direction is catabatic, descending from the sky, with the action of the scavenger to the ground, with the action of the serpent, and through the water with the movement of the ship, to human desire with the action of the sinful “Rake.” The numerals “three encapsulated in four” represent a chiastic or rhymed couplet scheme as follows:16

A) Three things
   B) Scavenger’s approach to the sky
   C) Serpent’s approach to the ground
   C’) Ship’s approach to the sea
   B’) “Rake’s” approach to the girl
A’) Four things

The scheme clearly shows the correlation between B and B’ as the limits of human grasp, which are unreachable, while C and C’ are related to the earth, which is also vast but accessible to people.

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16 To find the coherency between vv. 18–19 and v. 20, Rico (“L’énigme aux chemins effaces: Pr 30, 18–20,” 276–77), in vv. 19 and 20, translates the Hebrew יִתֵּן with the plural and reads: “...et le voies d’un homme dans le secret de sa jeunesse. Telles sont les voies d’une femme adultère. Elle mange, s’essuie la bouche tout en disant: ‘je n’ai rien fait de mal’” (“and the ways of a man in the secrecy of his youth. Such are the ways of an adulterous woman. She eats, wipes his mouth while saying: ‘I did nothing wrong’”). Rico links vv. 19 and 20 with the similar “ways of a man and an adulterous woman” in the coherent segue of “chemins effacés” (“cleared paths”) in vv. 18–20. See also Dohmen, “Das Immanuelzeichen,” 325.
The sequence is not as precise as in v. 4, but the general idea of the specification is obvious, where after the extremely vast sky and the less vast earth (rock) and water (sea), the author ends by focusing on the unpredictable desires of a man for a virgin, the entire theme being encapsulated into four things.

The consumption of the four characters in distinct immense spaces also denotes the active actions of the subjects and the passive or adaptable reactions of their determinations:

- Active scavenger and permissive sky
- Active serpent and permissive ground
- Active ship and permissive sea
- Active “Rake” and permissive virgin

The relationship between the subjects and their determinations is found in the paradox of how such an immense element as the sky can support a predator like a scavenger or an immense protective rock can hide an unfriendly serpent. In addition, the author asks how such an immense sea can support a hostile ship and finally, how such an immensity as an impure “Rake’s” desire for a pure virgin can spawn a sinner:

- Immense sky and predator scavenger
- Immense rock and unfriendly serpent
- Immense sea and hostile ship
- Immense sphere of a girl’s purity and impurity of the “Rake”

The predator scavenger cannot be compared with the immensity of the sky and, thus, it is presented as a subject that is consumed by its determinations. The same approach recurs in the following subjects of the serpent, which is consumed by the rocky ground; the ship, which is consumed by the sea and the sinful “Rake,” who is consumed by his desire, passion and relationship with the girl. Thus, the consumption of the subjects by the elements and emotions can be is represented as follows:
Scavenger consumed by the sky
Serpent consumed by the rock
Ship consumed by the sea
Sinner consumed by the emotion for a girl or virgin

Now, it emerges that the real intention of the author was to present the weakness of the subjects by comparing them with their objects. The negative power of the scavenger is consumed by the immense power of the sky, the negative connotation of the serpent is neutralized in the immense vastness of the rocky ground, the hostile presentation of the ship is consumed by the immensity of the water of the sea, and the negative activities of the “rake” or sinner are consumed by his emotions of desire and passion for the virgin.

This focusing method of vv. 18–19 corresponds to that of the concluding v. 20, where the subject constitutes the main link between the verses. With the mention of the “Rake” or sinner, the author concludes the presentation of the four different types of confrontation that result in vanishing or consumption with a concrete human example. The “Rake’s” desire for the girl suggests immorality. Since עַלְמָה in v. 19b also suggests a “virgin,” the man’s desire toward her is a striving toward immorality. In this way, the אִשָּׁה מְנָאָפֶּת in v. 20 or the “adulteress” goes hand-in-hand with the “Rake” or sinner. The confrontation is presented in terms of consumption, where all the subjects mentioned undergoing a process of consumption. The adulteress is consumed by her sinfulness, even though she does not perceive this happening to her, just as the scavenger does not realize its insignificance in the sky or the serpent on the rock or the ship in the immensity of the sea.

Thus, the “Rake” or sinner in v. 19 is closely related to the adulterous woman in v. 20. The sinful way of the adulteress is her sexual desire to sin. This is how the way of the “Rake” or sinner in v. 19, who also becomes lost in his sexual desire for a virgin woman, should also be understood.
The structure of vv. 18–20 is an inverted pyramid, which narrows according to the deduction of the message:

In this focusing method, the author graphically transmits the message about the sexual sinfulness of a man and woman through their uncontrolled passion:
The author opens the segment with the three examples from nature, concluding with example of human sinfulness and uncontrolled desire, in which the entire personalities of a man and woman can be lost.

The parallelism of “The Consumption of the ‘Ungodly Hypocrite’” in vv. 18–20 and “The Consumption of the ‘Godly Believer’” in vv. 10–15a involves the idea of consumption. The one who is “unprotected” is consumed by the stronger or more influential people who destroy him, while the one who claims to be “protected” is consumed by “unconquerable” elements and emotions.

There is also parallelism in the position and function of the segments of vv. 10–15a and 18–20. In order to not compromise the structure of the chapter, the author balances vv. 15b–16 and 18–20 with the same chiastic formula A ≤ B:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A) Three (v. 15b)</th>
<th>↔</th>
<th>A) Three things (v. 18a)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B) Death (v. 16a)</td>
<td>↔</td>
<td>B) Scavenger and sky (v. 19a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C) Life (v. 16a)</td>
<td>↔</td>
<td>C) Serpent and ground (v. 19b)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The consumption of the scavenger by the sky

The consumption of the serpent by the rock

The consumption of the ship by the open sea

The consumption of the sinner by the emotions of passion and desire
“Death” corresponds to the “scavenger” who kills, while the terrestrial motif links “life on earth” to the “serpent of the ground.” Likewise, “earth without water” and “ship in the vastness of the sea” refer to two main points of the earth, while the inextinguishable “fire” matches well with quenchless human desire.

In the case of both vv. 10–15a and 18–20, the verses that clarify the ideas of the segments are v. 15a, complementing vv. 10–14, and v. 20, complementing vv. 18–19.

2.8: The Microstructure of the Disapproval of the Unbalanced Society in vv. 21–23

The inappropriate actions of the subjects continue through the next three verses governed by the preposition תחת:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
\text{Death} & \text{Earth} & \text{Ship} & \text{Fire} \\
\text{Scavenger} & \text{v. 16b} & \text{v. 19c} & \text{v. 16bα} \\
\end{array}
\]
After the consumption of the subjects under the various circumstances in vv. 18–20, the following circumstances disturb the order of the world. Thus, besides lechery, which causes disorder in the world, the following situations constitute unacceptable behavior in society:

A) Three  
   B) Ruling by a butler over a kingdom  
   C) Prosperity of a shameless man (in society)  
   C’) Prosperity of a shameless woman (in marriage)  
   B’) Ruling by a maid over a household  
A’) Four

The structure of vv. 22–23 is indeed chiastic,\(^\text{(17)}\) wherein A corresponds to A’, as well as B to B’ and C to C’. In the structure B and B’, unacceptable rulers preside over society and the family, while in C and C’, prosperity occurs for similar types of people who do not deserve the social status they have acquired and, thus, are presented as being usurpers.\(^\text{(18)}\)

The structure of vv. 22–23 can be presented as follows:


The pressure noted in the final v. 33, included here implicitly and from both basic social sectors, civil and domestic, produces shameless people without any general sense of morality:

Ruling by the butler over the kingdom v. 22a

Ruling by the maid over the household v. 23b

Butler → kingdom

Maid → household

Shameless man and woman
The result of their usurped positions is shame for both the man and woman who are depicted in light of their undeserved prosperity.

The parallelism of the two segments in vv. 18–20 and vv. 21–23 lies in their negative approach to personalities in society regarding their morality and social status:

A) Three things
   B) Scavenger in the sky
   C) Serpent on the ground
   C’) Ship in the sea
   B’) Sinner in human desire
   A’) Four things
   v. 18a
   v. 19a
   v. 19b
   v. 20a
   v. 20b
   v. 18b

A) Three
   B) Ruling of a butler over a kingdom
   C) Prosperity of a shameless man (in society)
   C’) Prosperity of a shameless woman (in marriage)
   B’) Ruling by a maid over a household
   A’) Four
   v. 21a
   v. 22a
   v. 22b
   v. 23a
   v. 23b
   v. 21b

The content of vv. 21–23 also shows parallelism with vv. 7–9. In both segments, the negative influence on human life as presented in the previous segments (vv. 2–6 and 18–20) collides with the positive forms of rule established by creation. Since vv. 7–9 do not have a chiastic structure, while vv. 21–23 do, the parallelism between the segments is not that between the terms “apostasy, heresies, misery and abundance” (v. 8) and the “butler, shameless man, shameless woman and maid” (vv. 21 23), but rather in their respective context, where advantage is taken of unacceptable conditions such that apostasy and heresies replace orthodoxy and law, and misery and abundance disrupt the balance between God and man. In addition, the usurped positions of the king and the mistress of the household lead to general destruction, while the prosperity of shameless men or women disrupts the scale of human values.
2.9: The Microstructure of Accordance with the Creative Order in the World in vv. 24–28

The following segments of vv. 24–28 and 29–31 serve as an argumentum ad hominem vis-à-vis the previous segment of vv. 18-23, where moral deviations and various positions in society are assumed by inadequate and undeserving persons. In vv. 25–28, the author presents simple people who seem insignificant but, by fulfilling their daily duty, make the circle of society complete. At first glance, their role and influence in society seem unimportant but, in reality, these are very important and significant for harmony and order in the social pyramid.

The numeral four in v. 24 does not open with the chiastic formula A ≤ B but gradually emphasizes the similarities of the account A,B,C,D,E with the number four:¹⁹

A) Four, v. 24 →
   B) Folk who are not strong → like ants, v. 25
   C) Folk who are not numerous → like rock badgers, v. 26
   D) Folk who do not have any (social) system → like a locust, v. 27
   E) Folk who are unprotected → like a lizard, v. 28

In this case, the author also uses the method of focusing on the different statuses in society and, thus, via animal anthropomorphism, starts from a few influential people with high status and proceeds to numerous but noninfluential people with low status in society:²⁰

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¹⁹ Cf. Heim, Poetic Imagination, 156.
²⁰ Steinmann (Proverbs, 607) sees the chiasm between vv. 17–20 and 24–28. There is a thematic relationship in vv. 18–31 but it seems that there is no chiasm between vv. 17–20 and 24–28.
In the first two cases, the plural form represents abundance and, therefore, more influence in the society, while in the last two, the subjects in the singular refer to two classes on the margins of society.

The structure of the plural to singular shift is parallel in the use of negative particles from the negative introduction to the positive conclusion can be represented as follows:

Four: v.24
A) who are not strong (לֹא) v. 25
B) who are not numerous (לֹא) v. 26
C) who does not have any (social) system (אַיִּן) v. 27
D) who is unprotected v. 28

In this structure, the author does not use the chiastic enclosing formula A ≤ B, but rather uses the negative particles (A,B), a negative adverb (C) and an adversative particle (D) that refer not only to different social classes but also their different influences on society.21

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21 Ewald (Die Salômûnischen Schriften, 260) thinks that vv. 25–28 are networked in such a way that v. 27 is influenced by v. 25 and v. 28 by v. 26.
The paradox between vv. 2–4 and 24–28 is presented by way of an order–disorder line of society, where discord (vv. 2–4) or accord (vv. 24–28) can dominate. The discordance in human life begins in the improper treatment of God and man. The parallelism between vv. 2–4 and 24–28 has to do with personal order and harmony in society. The root בָּעַר in v. 2a characterized the animal behavior mentioned in vv. 25–27, where their instinctive order is highlighted. The animals’ instinctive order refers to the universal order in the world, which beings without a mind (בֵּינוֹן) cannot comprehend because they lack intelligence/knowledge (בִּינָה), which is an exclusively human characteristic. Thus, order is granted to each of God’s creatures on the basis of its nature and position in the orderly world. Disorder begins by negating the author of the order in the world. The only being who can grasp and appreciate God’s creative
order is the human, who not only can see the orderly creative organization of fellow humans (v. 4) but also of other earthly creatures (vv. 25–27).

The parallelism between human and animal consists in the God-given sense of organization and accord. The accord or harmony in humanity implies a coherence between the mind and sense of the transcendent (vv. 2–3), which is comparable with that present among animals with their sense of food, shelter, and capacity in the nature (vv. 24–28).

The author, after starting the chapter with a warning about human disorder (vv. 2–4), closes his argument with the created order in the world (vv. 24–28), which already exists and must be respected and put into practice.

2.10: The Microstructure of the Affirmation of the King’s Role in the World in vv. 29–31

There are some personalities in society who are privileged, who are gifted with the graciousness spoken in vv. 29–31. The chiastic A ≤ B formula is also found here, where the author moves from the strongest animal through the most persistent and ends with the most powerful man:

A) Three (v.29a)
   B) Alpha lion (v. 30a)
      C) Wild-markhor (v. 31a)
      C’) Tame-striker (v. 31α)
   B’) King (v. 31b)
A’) Four (v. 29b)

The above structure shows the close relation between A and A,’ as well as that between B and B’ and C’ and C. The lion represents the king of animals, while the king represents the sovereign ruler over people and all social classes. The segment can also be represented by the following graphic, which focuses on the king and his role among the people:

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22 Steinmann (Proverbs, 606–7) also finds a chiastic arrangement in vv. 29–31.
23 Steinmann (Proverbs, 607) also sees a chiasm between vv. 15–16 and 29–31.
Employing references to animals that are strong and persistent by nature, the writer points to the position of a king, who is also unapproachable by its nature, with all classes depending on the status of the king and his power over his kingdom:
Once again, the author uses the method of symbols taken from the wild (lion and wild markhor), through the domestic (tame striker) so focuses to on a human symbol of power and protection (king).

The method of moving from common examples and focusing on particularities can be recognized from v. 18 through the following verses up to v. 31. Graphically, it can be presented as a movement from examples of social disorder in the orderly world (vv. 19–23) through examples of the orderly social world (vv. 25–28), focusing on naturally privileged positions in the orderly world (vv. 30–31):
With these examples, the author illustrates the proper position of every creature in the world. Deviating from morality and forcing change in social status cause disorder in the world. The author believes that every position, class and status in society makes perfect sense and has its role to play in the world. Therefore, every attempt to violate this world order causes disorder in society.

The parallelism between vv. 29–31 and v. 1 consists of the awareness of the importance of a high position in society, which is represented by the highest royal rule. Disrespect of God in v. 1 is closely linked to disrespect for tradition, which includes both religion and culture. The role of the leader presented in vv. 29–31 is to serve as an example of moral and religious virtue to the people. The author, now approaching his conclusion, extols kingship (vv. 29–31) as encouragement for the leader whose religious and moral decline has a direct influence on his ruling, leading and guiding the people.
2.11: The Microstructure of the Way out: Stop the Sin in vv. 32–33

The conclusion of Proverbs 30 evidently demonstrates the necessity of its introduction. The introduction of Prov 30:15\textsuperscript{24} does not correspond to the conclusion of Prov 30:32–33. Instead, Prov 30:1, on the basis of our translation, explicitly emphasizes the “provocation,” saying or declaration that has to be condemned or silenced. The silencing of the provocation expressed by “shutting up the mouth” in Prov 30:32 corresponds to the exclamation of ungodliness in Prov 30:1.\textsuperscript{25} The conclusion with the verb נבל refers back to every shameless act from the very beginning of the chapter. The particle conjunctions אִּם highlight wrongdoing and advice for correction, while the last verse with the anaphoras מִיץ describes the result of shameless actions and emphasizes the disorder in society.

The structure of the conclusion consists of the question and conclusion in v. 32, and the focus on the final result in v. 33:

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\textsuperscript{24} See Chapter One of this dissertation.

\textsuperscript{25} Geiger (Urschrift, 62–63) already noted the close relationship between Prov 30:4 and Prov 30:32, where the particle אִּם in v. 32 refers to the doubt in v. 4.
The two אִּם serve as reinforcement of the final verse with its conditional aspects and concluding purpose of controlling oneself physically, keeping the mouth closed, and mentally practicing self-reflection and correction. The statements with the noun מִיץ additionally explain stubbornness in wrong ways and behaviors and, thus, the consequential punishment of every deviation in religion, morality and social life. The writer again starts from the natural world and uses the symbolic examples of milk—butter and body—blood in order to focus on his main point, which concerns that which is contrary to religion, morality and the social order.

The main point of vv. 32–33 is the correction or conversion of the transgressor. The warning excludes any kind of provocation that can lead to aggravation of the social situation and disregard of legislative, religious or moral precepts.

The parallelism of the “way out” in vv. 32–33 and the “way in” in v. 1 involves the provocation that opens and concludes the chapter. The religious provocation of v. 1, which was developed through the following verses about various deviations, reaches its conclusion with mastery of awareness and the call to conversion in vv. 32–33.
3. The Correlation Among the Microstructures

The correlation among the microstructures of Proverbs 30 can be represented as follows:

Way in: Sin (v.1a)

Degradation of God’s role in the World (v. 1b)

Discord with the Creative Order in the World (vv. 2–4)

Being without a mind (v. 2a)

Knowledge (v. 3a)

Human qualities (v. 3b)

Transcendental perception (v. 3c)

The heavens (v. 4d)

Water (v. 4c)

Wind (v. 4b)

Earth (v. 4a)

Disapproval of the Unbalanced Society (vv. 5–9)

Two (v. 7a)

Do not (v 7aβ)

Do not (8bα)

Lest (v. 9a)

Lest (9b)
Consumption **of the “Godly Believer”** (vv. 10–15a)

Do not, lest (v. 10)

Those who (v. 11)

Those who (v. 12)

Those who (v. 13)

Those who (v. 14)

Two (v. 15)

**Curse of “Ungodly Hypocrite”** (vv. 15b–17)

Three (v. 15b)

Capsule of death (v. 16a)

Capsule of life (v. 16aα)

Earth without water (v. 16b)

Fire without control (v. 16bα)

Father (v. 17a)

Mother (v. 17aα)

Raptors (v. 17aγ)

Chicks (v. 17aδ)

Four (v. 15b)

**Consumption of the “Ungodly Hypocrite”** (vv. 18–20)

Scavenger (v. 19a)

Serpent (v. 19b)

Ship (v. 19c)

Sinner (v. 19d)

Sinners (v. 20)

Sea (v. 19c)

Rock (v. 19b)

Sky (v. 19a)
Disapproval of the Unbalanced Society (vv. 21–23)

Three  v. 21a

Ruling by a butler over a kingdom  v. 22a

Prosperity of a shameless man (in society)  v. 22b

Prosperity of a shameless woman (in marriage)  v. 23a

Ruling by a maid over a household  v. 23b

Four  v. 21b

Accordance with the Creative Order in the World (vv. 24–28)

Four (v. 24)

Folk who are not strong → Like ants (v. 25)

Folk who are not populous → like rock hyraxes (v. 26)

Folk who do not have a (social) system → like a locust (v. 27)

Folk who are unprotected → like a lizard (v. 28)

Affirmation of the King’s Role in the World (vv. 29–31)

Three (v.29a)

Lion among the beasts (v. 30a)

Wild merkhor (v. 31a)

Tame striker (v. 31aα)

King amonf the people (v. 31b)

Four (v. 29b)

Way out: Stop sinning (vv. 32–33)
The above structure graphically represents the coherence of the segments in Proverbs 30. The style of the microstructures as presented above correlates with the macrostructure of the entire chapter. The introduction in v. 1a and the conclusion in vv. 32–33 are also coherent, while, after the announcement of the sin of ungodliness, the author proposes the concrete advice to cease causing disorder in society.

4. Translation of Proverbs 30

On the basis of the connotations, denotations and diction of Proverbs 30 and its structure, my translation of entire chapter is as follows:

Way in: Sin

v. 1a  
I became disturbed by the interpretation of the matters by the Youth of the Observer

Degradation of God’s Role in the World

v. 1b–c  
This is the master’s provocation: —Ungodliness!  
If ungodliness, then even worse:—Nothingness!

Discord with the Creative Order in the World

v. 2  
Subsequently, I am a being without mind and not a human being  
And without my human intelligence (knowledge)

v. 3  
and without my obtaining human qualities,  
(how) shall I comprehend transcendental perception?

v. 4  
(But ) who is that dominating in the heavens that came down?  
Who restrained the wind with (the strength of) his forearms?  
Who compressed the waters in the bundle?  
Who spread all the extremities of the earth?  
What is his name?  
And what is the name of his son?  
Now, you will know.

Disapproval of the Unbalanced Society

v. 5  Every announcement of God is appropriate. He is life-saving armor for those protected by him.

v. 6  Don’t distort his words lest he reprove you and you would prove yourself to be deceptive.

v. 7  Two I ask you from you. Do not withhold (them) from me before I die:

v. 8  Keep far from me the heresy and deceit. Do not curse me with misery or abundance. (On the contrary) bless me with the suitable providence concerning myself.

v. 9  Lest having in excess, I behave hypocritically and proclaim: “Who is the Lord? Likewise, lest I take what does not belong to me and commit desacralization and thus desecrate the name of my God.

Consumption of the Godly Believer

v. 10 Do not speak ill of a servant to his lord, lest he curse you so that you would be punished

v. 11 alike a generation that curses his father, and does not bless his mother.

v. 12 Generation pure in its eyes, despite not having washed its filth.

v. 13 Generation: look at those eyes, how haughty they are, while blinking with its eyelids.

v. 14 Generation with its teeth like swords, its molars like knives to consume (bring to nothingness) the unprotected of the land or the needy (for God) of humanity

v. 15a Suck! Suck!—alike a leech with two suckers.

Curse of the “Ungodly Hypocrite”

v. 15b Three of these things are without satisfaction, enclosed in four that do not say enough:

v. 16 whether the capsule of death, or the capsule of life, whether the earth without water, or fire without control.

v. 17 (Thus) the eye that mocks the father and despises the obedient mother etc. the nesting raptors may grab and the raptors’ chicks may eat it.
Consumption of the “Ungodly Hypocrite”

v. 18  The three things are very unusual to me
       encapsulated in four that are alien to me:

v. 19  The way (of the consumption) of the scavenger in (by) the sky,
       The way (of the consumption) of the serpent on (by) the rock,
       The way (of the consumption) of the ship into (by) the vastness of the sea,
       The way (of the consumption) of the rake by a girl.

v. 20  Thus the way (of the consumption) of the adulteress.
       She consumes (herself by fornication),
       washes her ‘mouth’ and says: “I did no wrongdoing.”

Disapproval of the Unbalanced Society

v. 21  In three, encapsulated in four (circumstances),
       the earth quakes and cannot stop (quaking):

v. 22  In the circumstance when the butler reigns,
       or a shameless man prospers.

v. 23  In the circumstance when a shameless woman marries,
       and a personal maid disinherits her mistress.

Accord with the Creative Order in the World

v. 24  There are four of the smallest (beings) of the earth
       but extremely wise:

v. 25  The ants, a folk who are not strong,
       but who prepare their food in summer.

v. 26  The rock hyraxes, a folk who are not mighty,
       but who make their home in a cave.

v. 27  The king does not exist for the locust,
       but every one of them goes out according to its proper position.

v. 28  The lizard can be grasped with the hands,
       but it is in the private rooms of the king.

Affirmation of the King’s Role in the World

v. 29  There are three who have a good stride,
       encapsulated in four with a good gait:

v. 30  The alpha lion, hero among the beasts,
       who does not retreat before anybody,

v. 31  whether the rearing wild merkhor (wild merkhor with stamina)
       as well as the tame striker,
       and the king rising among his people.
The Way out: Stop the Sin

v. 32  If you have behaved shamelessly by exaggerating,
      although you already have exaggerated, hand on mouth.

v. 33  Because butter goes out when churning the milk,
      blood goes out when striking the nose,
      protest (like this one) ensues when anger is provoked.
CHAPTER FIVE:

WHO IS SPEAKING TO WHOM AND ABOUT WHAT IN PROVERBS 30?

Questions about the message of Proverbs 30, the identity of the sender of the message and the addressee who receives it are crucial for understanding the message and purpose of the chapter. At first glance, the sender of the message seems to be someone who is provoked by another person’s provocation. The provocative person is presented as highly influential in society, while the provoked one appears to be an anonymous individual. Moreover, the highly positioned provocateur appears to be an apostate with ungodly aspirations and social insensibility, while the anonymous person who is provoked demonstrates religious conviction and a passion for social justice.

There is no mention of the name of the speaker anywhere in Proverbs 30. However, the first person singular in v. 1 and the second masculine singular in vv. 6, 10 and 32 indicate the presence of two main characters. Here, prior to my close examination of the two characters, the person in the first singular will be presented as “I,” while the individual in the second masculine singular will be called “You.”¹

The information about the “I” person is very limited and can only be inferred from vv. 1–3 and contextually from v. 10. The “You” person is the main subject of the entire chapter and is referred to throughout Proverbs 30, especially in the segments vv. 5–9 (v. 6), 10–15a (v. 10) and 32–33, where the pronoun “you” is explicitly used. Therefore, according to the occurrences of the two persons, the “You” person should be examined and analyzed prior to the “I” person.

¹ Christopher B. Ansberry (Be Wise, My Son, and Make My Heart Glad, 2011) finds in Proverbs 30 only one “I,” thinking that in Prov 30:32–33 “direct address of the autobiography (30:1b–10)” is noted.
1. **The Addressee or the “You” Person**

Whereas the verb אָגוּר partially discloses the authorship of Proverbs 30 and alludes to its theme, the verb indicates, not an action, but rather a reaction to another’s action, which the subsequent wording explains as a “provocation.” The provocation cited in v. 1, owing to its terminology, leads to a shocking act of “ungodliness” (cf. Lam 2:20; 4:10; Deut 28:53–57). According to the author of Proverbs 30, the person who provoked such ungodliness is not acting in keeping with his social position but, rather, in such a manner as to provoke those who are neither in a position to oppose him legally in a juridical way nor argue with him a pari, but rather those who by their social status are subservient to him. Thus, the provocation of the “You” person was unanticipated by the “I” person and unacceptable to society.2

The *terminus technicus* נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר (cf. Num 24:3; 2 Sam 23:1) as the description of a personal proclamation (cf. Herder, *Herders sämmtliche Werke*, 125), which, in reality is a provocation, is correlated with the *terminus theologicus* of God’s public proclamation in נְאֻם יְהוָה (cf. נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר in Chapter Two of this dissertation).3 The *terminus technicus* נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר indicates the “burden” of the message delivered by its author (cf. Num 24:3–4; 2 Sam 23:1; Ps 110:1; Isa 1:24).4 The term נְאֻם makes the message a definite and formal one.5 Thus, the person “You” who provokes with his ungodliness is presented here as a “Provocateur.” From v. 1–4, it is already evident that the “Provocateur” is as important as the provocation itself (cf. 1 Kgs 21:7, 10), suggesting that the description of נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר (“the master’s provocation”) corresponds to its concept of הַגֶּבֶּר (“ungodliness”).

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In Proverbs 30, the “Provocateur” who causes the provocation is officially an observer of God’s commands (cf. v. 6). In addition, the “Provocateur,” as the son of the “Observer,” by his social status is also supposed to be an observer and believer, keeper of orthodoxy and proponent of religion. The Observer in the MT is practicing and protecting orthodoxy and may be regarded as a judge, priest, prophet or king (cf. Num 16: 1–3; 1 Kgs 21: 1–19).

From the context of v. 1, the provocation of the person “You” is a personal statement, which by its content causes disorder regarding belief in the God of Israel (vv. 1, 5–6), as proclaimed by someone by whom it should not be proclaimed. The titles of “master” and “lord” in vv. 1 and 10 and the society that consumes godly people in v. 14–15b allude to a noble or even royal character presented in vv. 29–31. The question arises whether the “You” person could be a judge of Israel, a priest or even a prophet or the king.

Samuel was called to be the successor to the judge Eli, owing to the iniquities of Eli’s sons (cf. 1 Sam 3:13). Eli’s failure to admonish his sons, which preceded the legal punishment for their provocations of God (cf. Lev 24:16), caused the overthrow of Eli’s family as judges of Israel and the appointment of Samuel as a new, obedient judge. Here, it emerges that acts of iniquity (קלל) in Israel must be denounced and utterly condemned. Given the case of Eli’s sons, the “You” person could be a judge who has disgraced his position. However, the author of Proverbs 30 heretofore presented as “I” is very careful in approaching the subject of who provoked the ungodliness and masterfully avoids using his name and title by calling him the “Youth.” This is neither a name nor title, but rather a term for the younger generation or offspring of a highly positioned person. Thus, the “Youth” could have been the son of someone

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eminent in society, someone with a hereditary relationship.\(^9\) In addition, the designation of the “Youth” also alludes to the father’s status, which can mean father-like (cf. Gideon’s “king-like” standing in Judg 8:18).\(^10\) The designation of בִּן־יָקֶּה as the “Youth of the Observer” instead of simply “Observer” (cf. Deut 21:5; Lev 1:5; Neh 3:8), indicates someone who has personally inherited the lawful right to perform religious rites. In this regard, the author neither warns the provocateur by way of an intimate father-son counsel (thus Steinmann, Proverbs, 606) nor via a strongly polemic attack (thus Ewald, Die Salômonischen, 250f. and Scott, Proverbs, 176), or even with a critique (thus Bickell, “Kritische,” 293f.) but rather in an initially dispassionate correction of apparent agreement (v. 1c) and statement of self-denial (cf. בִּן־יָקֶּה in v. 2), proceeding with coherent arguments (vv. 4, 7–31) and concludes by a calling for the self-correction of the “Provocateur” (v. 33). Thus, the “You” person, who is actually the “Youth,” cannot be a judge or priest himself, but rather the son of a judge or the son of a priest.\(^11\) The problem with calling the “You” person a prophet or priest is that the “ungodliness” presented in vv. 1, 11–15a, 18–20 and 21–23 would be considered as a false and scandalous pronouncement if made by either, which would be as such openly proclaimed, publicly punished (cf. Deut 13:1–5; 1 Kgs 22:19–23) and ultimately condemned as false prophecy (cf. Jer 6:13, 33:8; 11 34:7, 36:1:8; Zech 13:2). In addition, the author of Proverbs 30 does not openly proclaim a message against the king (cf. 1 Kgs 14:1–18; 1 Kgs 21:17–29 [2 Kgs 9:30–37]; Ezek 28) or the people (cf. Jer 25:1–14; Hab 1:5–6; Zeph 1:14–16), but passes over the provocateur’s name, tempted to provide a more descriptive characteristics of this person, calling him בִּן־יָקֶּה.

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\(^9\) Cf. Noth, Bewährung, 228.


(“the Master”). The title “Master” has already been explained in Chapter Two; in relation to the אֱדוֹן (“Lord”) of v. 10, and might be considered to refer to a person of high status in society (cf. Judg 3:25; 2 Sam 2:7; see also 2 Kings 19:4) or someone who has others under his authority (1 Kings 22:17; Prov 27:18; 30:10). Furthermore, the description of “Master” also denotes someone with a significant inheritance (1 Kings 8:20). In this regard, the only possibility for connecting the “Youth” with the title “Master” is as a reference to someone who personally inherits lawful authority to exercise sovereign rights (the throne or the crown). Such an inheritance is not that of a prophet or priest, but regularly pertains to a king. Thus, the actual person alluded to here is an heir, someone who succeeds his father and inherits the father’s property. Since the titles “master” of v. 1 and “lord” of v. 10 are used in the MT as a king’s titles and for a king’s family, the terms בִּן־יָקֶה and הַגֶּבֶּר could denote a crown prince or co-regent with his father.

The “Youth” is primarily portrayed here in the light of his provocative ungodly pronouncement, which might be a neologism and sounds like apostasy. By the religious expressions in v. 5 and rebuke in v. 6, the person referred to as the “Addressee,” “He,” “Provocateur,” “Youth,” and “Master” is a formal monotheist who is supposed to observe the Mosaic Law, rather than an adherent of polytheism or skepticism regarding belief in the God of Israel (cf. Isa 57:3–13).

The warning formulated in the second masculine singular (cf. v. 6, 10, 32–33) is directed to the “You” person, who provoked the reaction of the “I” person. The apostasy alluded to by the neologism לְאִיתִּיאֵל in v. 1 and the noun שָוְא in v. 8 presents the “You” person as an informal apostate who rejects his official religious belief, following his own interpretation, which is contrary to the official religion that he represents.

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13 The example of the co-regency of Manasseh with his father, Hezekiah, will be examined later in this dissertation. Cf. Hobbs, 2 Kings, 305.
14 Oswalt, Isaiah 40–66, 483.
The high social position of the “Master” is implicitly expressed in vv. 7–10, where the “I” person is disapproving of the polarization between the wealth and poverty in his society, while mentioning wealth as the main reason for ungodliness. The rich and ungodly lord in v. 9 corresponds to the ungodly provocateur in v. 1, who, in a God-fearing society, behaves hypocritically regarding his belief in God.

The proximity of the “Master” of v. 1 and the “Lord” of v. 10 reflects a hierarchy. The correlation of lord-master corresponds to the familial father-son relationship that the subsequent vv. 11 and 17 additionally support. In addition, the class relationship lord-servant involves a subservient relationship that differs from the father-son relationship. Thus, the provocateur is someone who has a strong influence on the “Lord,” of v. 10, on whose mercy the position of the “I” person depends.

In vv. 11–15a and 15b–17, the hypocrisy of the ungodly person is revealed as one who not only despises the God of Israel but also does not respect his parents (cf. v. 11), who is in religious error (cf. vv. 12–13), and socially arrogant and insensitive (vv. 14–15). Thus, the reference to an ungodly man in vv. 1 and 9 is elaborated in vv. 11–15a and recapitulated in vv. 15b–17. The opponent of the godly and subservient man is presented as an ungodly overbearing man (vv. 11–15a), such that one who is socially weak and obedient is destroyed by a socially strong and arrogant oppressor (cf. Ps 73:9; Qoh 6:7–9; Hab 2:5). Thus, the “You” person in vv. 1–4, mainly presented as an “Ungodly man” in v. 9, is additionally characterized as a “Hypocrite,” who in reality does not believe in God, who in vv. 14–15a oppresses those subject to him and who not only does not contribute to society but seeks to destroy it. The hypocrisy of his sinful way is reflected in his ungodly and sinful behavior. The hypocritical attitude of the ungodly person presented in vv. 12–13 reveals the discrepancy between his position and his behavior. In this regard, the “You” person can be ultimately called the “Ungodly Hypocrite” who exploits the people subject to him. The label “Leech” is an appropriate name for such a person, who oppresses and exploits

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godly believers and the people subject to him. The intention of the person “I” is to relativize the power and influence of the “Leech” or “Ungodly Hypocrite” by invoking the reality of death as his definitive perishing from the earth.\(^{16}\)

The curse of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” in v. 17 entails death by violence (cf. Exod 23:19; Judges 4; 1 Kgs 14:11). The mention of “raptors” alludes to the need for society to oppose ungodly wickedness aggressively by brutally eliminating the wicked, while the raptor’s brood metaphorically refers to the necessity of such elimination to provide the only food for the gluttony of the raptor’s chicks. The same noun, “chicks,” also alludes to younger persons as the next generation of society, who will take revenge on the “Ungodly Hypocrite.” However, the curse is an expression of anger and annoyance by the author, in which the death of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” is only a wish or prayer that may eventually be fulfilled in the present (by the raptors) or in the future (by the chicks).

In the following vv. 18–20, the definitive consumption of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” previously presented and elaborated in vv. 1–4, 5–9 and 11–15a, and recapitulated in vv. 15b–17, becomes the real destiny of his slow but sure consumption, where the invocative curse of sudden death in v. 17 is replaced by the slow consumption and death by way of natural elements and human emotions. Not having a stronger opponent or peer, the “Ungodly Hypocrite” has to be destroyed by the natural elements and human emotions, which wipe him off the face of the earth. Thus, the destiny of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” presented here as a “rake” or sinner par excellence, is consumption by the elements and emotions or, in a wider context, self-consumption in time and space. Thus the “You” person is presented as an arrogant “rake,” who perishes due to his deeds and sinful nature.

\(^{16}\) There is no pessimism in this segment, although the theory of the perishing of everything existing can be related to some extent to the theme of the Book of Qoheleth.
The disapproval of the unbalanced society in vv. 21–23 may correspond to the present situation of the society led by the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” where the presentation of inadequate persons and responsible positions occurs. The “Ungodly Hypocrite” is presented not only as one who seems inadequate for his position but also who destroys his society.

The simple folk of vv. 24–28 represent commoners who carry out their daily tasks and duties in society and metaphorically serve as counterweights to the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” who abuses his position, attempting to destroy the social balance. By the examples of these simple folk, the person “You,” who represents the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” is both encouraged and rebuked by humble and insignificant communities in society who are also good examples of social responsibility. Thus, the “You” person is contrasted here to the good example of simple society and his destructive influence on society is now polarized by the creative influence of the four simple examples of a balanced society.

In the examples of the duties of leaders in vv. 29–31, the author highlights the indispensable role of a leader in society. It is he who stands before the people, who represents and leads them. How the entire kingdom fares depends on the king because it is subject to and depends on the king, like a pride of lions to the alpha lion in v. 30 or led by the king like a flock of goats by the he-goat or striker in v. 31. The well-being and prosperity of a society depend on its leadership (cf. v. 31). The “You” person is encouraged to take his position seriously as a real leader, whom society accepts and obeys.

The conflict between the two subjects “You” and “I” featured in Proverbs 30 concludes in vv. 32–33 with the definition of יִרְבַּ as quiet “protest.” The “You” person is held responsible for provoking the animosity between “You” and “I.” The “You” person is encouraged to step back and accept the correction of his “I” opponent.
The negative presentation of the addressee “You” is dominant in the entire chapter. The author perceives him as a “Provocateur,” “Youth,” “Master,” “Apostate,” “Lord,” “Leech,” and “Rake” who is presented as an “Ungodly Hypocrite” or “Banisher.” The negative connotations of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” are gradually presented in Proverbs 30. Starting with the negative presentation of the “Provocateur” as an apostate who does not obey God’s precepts, the “Ungodly Hypocrite” is characterized as a person of high social position, such as a “Lord” (cf. vv. 1 and 10) who does not follow his father’s righteous path but belongs to a generation (vv. 11–15a) who, like a two-headed leech, sucks everything that is God’s and man’s dry (cf. v. 15).

While the condemnation of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” culminates in v. 17 with by presenting him as representative of God-fearing society who however rejects God and harms society (vv. 15b–17), a way out is offered to him by the series of encouragements in vv. 24–33, in which he is urged to rebalance the turbulent society (24–28), behave like a king (29–31) and repent (vv. 32–33).

2. The Sender or the Person “I”

The author of Proverbs 30 develops a broad elaboration of the ungodly provocative statement, which, ultimately, not only reveals the religious deviation of the ungodly person but also his hypocritical behavior and the abuse of his position and power.

As noted previously, the position of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” has to be higher than the position of the “I” person, who opposes the “Youth’s” proclamation. The difference in status between the two subjects is revealed by vv. 2–3. This is probably why the author speaks in the first person in vv. 2–3 instead of the third masculine singular. Aware of his position, the “I” person employs a painless way to avoid offending or angering the “Ungodly Hypocrite.” The author highlights the content of Proverbs 30, which comprises a strong statement of the “ungodliness” that personally disturbs or even scandalizes him.
In addition, a person who is scandalized by another person regularly is in a subservient position toward the person who scandalizes. The provocateur contradicts not only the religious belief of a particular person but also that of all those who are under his rule. Thus, the author of Proverbs 30 is socially subservient to the “Ungodly Hypocrite.”

The person who received or heard the provocation had to be relatively close to the subject who caused the provocation in order to witness his improper acts or to hear his ungodly statement, even though he is not in a position to accuse him officially and expose his guilt before the Law. In this regard, the “I” person is someone who is in physical proximity to the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” who knows him personally and is convinced of his wrongdoing.

The usage of the pronoun אָנ כִּי in v. 2 corresponds to Revell’s explanation that the person who is using a “default pronoun” is someone of lower social status than the recipient.17 In addition, the “I” person, using this self-denial pronoun, protects himself from the authority of the one to whom his words are addressed. The pronoun אָנ כִּי at the same time emphasizes the difference in social status between the “I” person and the “Ungodly Hypocrite” and concerns not only the ungodly words and actions but also the status of the “I” person. Thus, the person “I” is the spokesman of those who are provoked by the ungodly hypocrite but are also socially and personally subjected to him.

In vv. 2–4, the “I” person very eloquently develops the anthropological and theological epistemology about God and humans and their relationship. In vv. 2–3, the author shows his teaching skill by gradually drawing a conclusion by means of circumstantial clauses: No human characteristics → No human qualities → No transcendental perception. The shifts from ungodliness to nothingness in v. 1 and from a man without a mind and a man without God are presented by a knowledgeable person who knows

17 Cf. Revell, “The Two Forms,” 205f; Steinmann (Proverbs, 606) instead identifies the dominant theme of vv. 1–9 as the father’s instruction to his son to enable him to live by divine wisdom.
the methodology of arguing epistemologically (in manner of existing and present evidences) and, thus, of intelligent thinking, which makes use of supporting examples.\textsuperscript{18} In the precision of his deductive argument, the “I” person, with a well-crafted argument, offers the arguments to the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” which should be simply accepted by human logic (v. 4f.). Thus, the person who epistemologically explains God’s function in human nature, divine creative intervention and the human capacity for comprehension appears as an teacher or better as an epistemologist in vv. 2–3. In his knowledgeable way, the “I” person employs a teaching method by which the case is set out in stages.\textsuperscript{19} The epistemological method in vv. 2–3 and theological references in v. 4 are educational and instructive. In this sense, the person “I” can be considered to be an educated “Epistemologist” who in a rational way of visible and existing evidences convinces the confrontational side of a truth.

With his progressive deductive method and developing arguments, the “Epistemologist” in v. 4 explains God’s creative intervention in the world. This reference to the theological component of creation suggests that the “Epistemologist,” besides his anthropological knowledge, is a scholar of Israelite theology, who speaks in a very conceptual manner. In this regard, we do not find here any relation with the extra-biblical sources on the human-divine journey in concretizing the biblical manner of creation.\textsuperscript{20} Thus, the “Epistemologist” is a Jewish scholar, who alludes to the long biblical narrative of the creation in a conceptual way (cf. Gen 1:1–2:4).


\textsuperscript{19} In Greek antiquity, the deductive conclusion is called *scholia*, while the user of such a methodology is called a *scholiast*. Cf. Eleanor Dickey, *Ancient Greek Scholarship: A Guide to Finding, Reading, and Understanding Scholia, Commentaries, Lexica, and Grammatical Treatises from Their Beginnings to the Byzantine Period* (American Philological Association; Oxford: University Press, 2007) 18–24, 150–66.

\textsuperscript{20} Van Leeuwen (“The Background to Proverbs 30:4α,” 102–121) by contrast, cites extra-biblical texts or “heavenly ascent,” as a parallel to Prov 30:4.
The theology of the God of Israel explains the following vv. 5–6, where the author shows his orthodoxy and orthopraxy that are rooted in the faith of the God of Israel. Thus, the author relies on the biblical accounts and tradition of revealing God’s word, which are to be accepted and observed. In this regard, the “Believer” in God’s revealing word is making his personal statement of the necessity of heeding God’s words and observing them out of fear and respect. Thus, the “Godly Believer” is a God-fearer and practical believer in the God of Israel.

In vv. 7–9, the “Godly Believer,” comparing the arrogance of the ruling people and the misery of the oppressed, alludes to the actual social situation in the country. The “Godly Believer” prays for stability and balance in his society, as will be elaborated more clearly in vv. 21–23 and 24–28. Thus, the “Godly Believer” is concerned not only about the theological deviation by the “Ungodly Hypocrite” but ever more about the moral and social deviations of the high social class in his country.

The “Godly Believer” discloses his social status by demonstrating his servitude to the “Lord” in v. 10 and the “Master” in v. 1. The defense of servants and people of the low classes is well articulated in vv. 10–17. Those who do evil but feign to do good are the focus of vv. 11–17. The theme of feigning here is the recapitulation of v. 1, where the “Ungodly Hypocrite” is mentioned for the first time as the “Youth” who does not observe what is demanded by God. Although called to such observance, in reality he is a disobedient and rebellious son who does not follow the tradition of the obedient father and, thus, religious tradition or social justice.\footnote{Cf. Christopher J. H. Wright, \textit{God’s People in God’s Land: Family, Land, and Property in the Old Testament} (Ann Arbor: Books on Demand, 1990) 76–78, 228–31.} In this regard, vv. 10–15a present the “Godly Believer” as a victim of the

In vv. 18–20, the “Godly Believer” presents the idea of the obliteration of the “untouchables” by elements that consume everything existing. The oppressor, who cannot be oppressed by others, is obliterated by different elements. Sin is the reason for the consumption of the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” who commits sins but does not acknowledge them. The “Godly Believer” is presented as one who foresees and announces the retribution to the “Ungodly Hypocrite” because of his trespasses against the “Godly Believer” or righteous people presented in vv. 11–17. Thus, the “Godly Believer” presents Israel’s theology of retribution, where “the succession of guilt and fate is emphasized” (cf. Prov 10:30, 31; 11:2, 18–23; 12:8, 20; 13:21–25; 14:11, 19; 15:6). 23

In vv. 21–23, the “Godly Believer” returns to clarify the “Ungodly Hypocrite’s” high position and expresses his awareness of deviations in society, starting with the royal position. The inadequate words and actions of the king are the cause of the chaotic and turbulent situation in the kingdom. Thus, the “Godly Believer” is a theoretician concerning the present social situation in his country.

In the following vv. 24–28; 29–31 and 32–33, the “Godly Believer” guides the “Ungodly Hypocrite” toward the reestablishment of society and repentance (cf. Gen 49:7) and offers to the “Ungodly Hypocrite” a good example of how the world should function. Sociological knowledge about the universal organization of the world is presented by the “Godly Believer” as a sociologist who understands the framework of human society.

23 Westermann, Roots, 78.
In vv. 29–31, the “Godly Believer” encourages the “Ungodly Hypocrite” to respect his unique and privileged position in society. In an orderly world, every person has his position, especially those who are leading the people (vv. 29–31). The duty of the leader is to govern the people and share their destiny with them. The psychological moment of encouragement to the “Ungodly Hypocrite” by the “Godly Believer” now characterizes the relationship between the “You” and the “I.” Thus, the “Godly Believer” is a good counselor to the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” someone who knows how to criticize, encourage and bring the king back to faithfulness (cf. Deut 33:1–6).

In the concluding vv. 32–33, a call to stop the sin is issued. This call is both ultimate and necessary. The “Godly Believer” advises self-control in the words and actions of the “Ungodly Hypocrite.” In the very last verse, the “Godly Believer” protests against the dangerous speech and acts of the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” which, if unchecked, can spread to the society as a whole.

The titles of the “I” person, e.g., “author,” “one who is socially subservient to the person ‘You,’” “one who is physically close to the person ‘You,’” “spokesman,” “educator,” “theologian,” “godly man,” “believer,” “servant,” “theoretician,” “sociologist” and “counselor,” can be integrated into the term “Godly Believer,” who is subservient to the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” who by disturbing the relation with God and the balance in society provokes the “Godly Believer” to react.

3. What Is the “Godly Believer” Talking About?

3.1: God’s Authorship of Creation (vv. 1–4)

Descriptions of the death of gods or their powerlessness are not uncommon in the Near East. An Ugarit text (KTU 1.6 I.39–43) presents the goddess Athirat (Asherah), who exalts over the death of the god as Baal proclaimed by Anat, the goddess of war: “Now Athirat and her sons may rejoice—the goddess and her gang of dependents. For the most mighty Baal is dead, the Prince, the Lord of the earth,
has perished.” This idea of gods’ perishing reflects the ancient belief in gods as contingent beings and not eternal. If a deity is contingent, his ongoing influence on humanity is limited. In this line, the ungodly statement in Prov 30:1 denies God’s permanent influence and leadership in Israel. This provocation inspired the “Godly Believer” to react to the “Ungodly Hypocrite’s” statement about the official religion.

Deviation from the official religion of Israel, formal monotheism with all the legislation founded on the Mosaic Law, was regularly subject to punishment. Such punishment comprised excommunication or even death. Due to the high social position of the apostate, the danger of such judgment was eliminated. The only possibility for stopping the “Ungodly Hypocrite” was to warn him to put his “hand on [his] mouth” (v. 32).

In the Psalms, ungodliness is characteristic of the wicked (cf. Ps 10:4; 14:1). Now, the general question arises as to whether the speaker’s negation of God is existential or functional. The Bible uses the nouns רָשָע (“wicked,” cf. Ps 10:4; Gen 18:23; 1 Kgs 8:32) and נָבָל (“wicked,” Ps 14:1; Deut 32:6; 2 Sam 3:33) to express the diametrical opposition between God and sinner. According to the OT, Israel’s most critical religious point was the coexistence of other gods besides the God of Abraham (cf. 2 Sam 7:22; 1 Kgs 8:60; 2 Kgs 1:3.6). The negation of God in Prov 30:1 cannot be existential (against Scott, 176) but rather functional. The “Ungodly Hypocrite” is not negating God’s existence but rather disparaging the primary role of the God in Israel as the giver of the Law. In other words, the “Ungodly Hypocrite” is negating the official religion of Israel.24 Thus, existential unbelief in God by the “Ungodly Hypocrite” is not an issue in Proverbs 30; instead, God’s rule in Israel is being questioned (cf. Job 1:8; 2:3). The terms used as antonyms of “wicked” are usually “blameless,” “upright” and “God-fearing,”25 which the “Godly

24 Dahood (Psalms I, p. 63) claims that the wickedness of the sinner is not a negation of the existence of God, but rather negation of his intervention in human affairs. This statement corresponds to deism, which was not an issue in Israel, much less atheism, but rather the desacralization of Israel’s monotheistic belief with idolatric influences and the abandoned or “diluted” official religious observance of the Law (cf. 1 Sam 2:2; 2 Sam 7:22; 22:23; 2 Kgs 5:15; Ps 18:32; Isa 44:6; 45:5; Dan 3:95; Hos 13:4).
25 Cf. Clines, Job 1–20, 24; 42.
Believer” presents in vv. 5–6. In short, the “Ungodly Hypocrite” in Proverbs 30 is actually an apostate, who allows himself the liberty of acting, talking and behaving according his own notions rather than according to God’s Law and theocratic stipulations.

The repetition of the pronouncement לְאִּיתִּיאֵל indicates the author’s certainty regarding the master’s argument. If the repetition of “ungodliness” were an Aramaic cryptogram for a blasphemous statement, the orthodox believer certainly would have eliminated the repetition. Instead, the statement לְאִּיתִּיאֵל could be a neologism coined by the “Ungodly Hypocrite” himself. The repetition also alludes to the musing of the “Godly Believer,” to whom ungodliness is an intriguing challenge to be elaborated, explained and finally negated.

The “Godly Believer’s” primary conviction is that the negation of the sovereignty of Israel’s God also denies humanity. This hypothetical “nothingness” is presented by the “Godly Believer.” In this respect, according to the “Godly Believer,” the denial of the activity of God among his people is at the same time the denial of God’s creation. By this hypothetical chasm of ungodliness and, thus, nothingness, the chasm between God who creates and man who is God’s creature is presupposed. The “Godly Believer” is convinced that idolatry cannot create intelligent and spiritual humanity and that the powerful visible creation of the world cannot have been made simply by an idol or wooden deity (Isa 44:17; 45:20; Jer 10:8; Hos 4:12). Otherwise, intelligence/knowledge, spirituality, skills and all other human qualities (cf. vv. 2–3) have to be denied because there is no deity who can create these qualities except the God of Israel (cf. Ps 46:11). The following anthropological epistemology by the “Godly Believer” in Prov 30:2 further supports this statement. The development of God’s creative action follows the master’s “logic” until the conclusion in v. 4. If the definitive statement that there is no role for God in Israel is valid, then the theocratic Law is annulled per se. The “Godly Believer” based on the ungodly statement forms the

epistemology of language and from proclaimed ungodliness forms the human immanent dependence on his Creator.

Thus, the *metalepsis* of the term אֻכָל ("nothingness") could also easily be a neologism coined by the “Godly Believer” himself. The implausible definition of “ungodliness” sequentially causes the definition of “nothingness.” This cause-effect process (godliness—nothingness) initiated by the “Godly Believer” is a deliberately cursory expression, with which the author already neutralizes the definition of “ungodliness.”

In vv. 2–3, the “Godly Believer” uses the first person singular self-denial pronoun “I”. This usage is a further reason to posit that the subservient “Godly Believer” is not dealing with his son or his peer but with a person of high social status.28 The use of the root יְבֻל in v. 2 is the author’s substitution for the synonym יָבַל (cf. v. 32), both roots designating a population who, by their illogical conclusions, seem to be “out of their minds” or arrogant, in revolt and renegades from their religion.29

In v. 2, the “Godly Believer” begins his theological epistemology, going deeply into the problem of ungodliness that leads to nothingness. If the “Ungodly Hypocrite” claims ungodliness, which in reality is nonsense because of the Creator’s dynamic activity in the created universe, then he also has to declare nothingness, which is a *contradictio in se* because of the existence and proof of the material, intelligent and spiritual human world.

Human intelligence leads to the acknowledgment of created things and, thus, to their Creator. Therefore, the only possibility for relating to divine activity in the world is through human intelligence

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and spirituality. This is “Archimedes’ lever” for the author of Proverbs 30 in his epistemological development of the argument of creation.

The “Godly Believer” contrasts the human capacity to accept divine creative dynamism with intelligence/knowledge and the other human qualities (cf. v. 3), which can be developed by knowledge, experience or proof in order to grasp the main point of God’s creative rule in the world. The theological epistemeology about God in vv. 2–4 is based on anthropological epistemeology about human intelligence and spirituality in vv. 1c-3.

The claim that God has no function in Israel has to be approved by human intelligence/knowledge, qualities, skills and investigation of the transcendental in order to conclude that from the basic material world though intelligence to the highest level of the transcendental, there is no evidence of God’s action into human history. The human capacity to grasp God’s creative activity in the world is ignored by the “Ungodly Hypocrite” who simply negates the Creator’s dynamism without any analysis or proof. By contrast, the “Godly Believer” examines the human capacity for intelligence, which through human qualities and skills can reach the perception of existing divine providence, which dominates and rules over created nature and thus clarifies his point of the epistemeology about the Creator who made the intelligent and spiritual creature.

Basing humanity purly on intellectual evidence, the “Godly Believer” turns to the religious explanation of creation in v. 4. God’s powerful dynamism of moving from heaven to earth includes his

30 Murphy (Ecclesiastes, 72) who sees here and in Qoh 7:15–24 “the ‘distance’ of wisdom, (which) recalls the theme of Job 28 and the words of Agur (Prov 30:1–4), where ‘wisdom’ is something beyond the practical wisdom that is the heritage of the sage. It is mysterious and unattainable; it belongs with God alone.”

31 Zoltán S. Schwáb (Toward an Interpretation of the Book of Proverbs [JTISup 7; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013] 111) in Prov 7:1–27; 23:27–20 and 30:3 identifies a “loose women (who) try to entice the student of wisdom.”

creative organization of nature. The descending or catabatic method alludes to the first two chapter of Genesis. The author first links the heavens and earth as two extreme realities and then describes the process of creation in between, with the wind as the separator of the waters, on the earth as well as upon the earth. The final divine arrangement forms the earthly platform as the perfect habitat for humans. That the creation of the earth was the author’s intention is evidenced by the catabatic presentation, where after the presentation of the heavens and celestial elements, the ultimate action is the preparation of the earthly platform by divine action. By the biblical evidence of the creation in v. 4 the “Godly believer” develops the theological epistemology about God of Israel who created the intelligent and spiritual human and the entire world.

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34 Human limitation of knowledge and experience is found in Job 11:7–8.


3.2: Disapproval of Unbalanced Society (vv. 5–9) \(^{38}\)

The contradiction between נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר (“the master’s ‘purely human’ false announcement”) in v. 1 and כָּל־אִמְרַת אֱלוֹהַּ (“every announcement of God”) in v. 5 takes place after the argument for God’s creative activity in the world, where the “Godly Believer” refers to God’s revealing words, which have to be placed in the heart (Ps 119:38, 133), respected (Ps 119:38, 133), observed (Pss 119:50, 60, 140, 162, 172; 147:15) and believed (Pss 119:41, 58, 76, 82, 103, 116, 154, 170). In Isa 5:24, הָנָר (“announcement”) is a synonym for הָנָר (“the Torah” or “instruction”) that Moses wrote down and presented to the people (cf. Exod 24:3, 4).\(^{39}\) The “announcement” of God, which the “Godly Believer” highlights, supposes the study and practice of the entire Five Books of Moses.\(^{40}\) This is the reason why in v. 5 Grätz (“Exegetische,” 436) reads צְרוּפָה and מָגֵן as a synonym for הָנָר (“the instructions”), where “every announcement of God” refers to the Torah as a whole. The “life-saving armor” is a figure that represents God himself and who protects the godly people. Thus, the theology of v. 5 is very monotheistic and follows from the preceding elaboration of creation in v. 4. The orthodoxy of the theologian is expressed in his observance of כָּל־אִמְרַת אֱלוֹהַּ or the Law rather the נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר (“the master’s ‘false’ announcement”), which is personal and subjective. In short, the analogy between soldier and arm on the one hand and the believer and Law on the other hand is presented in v. 5. Thus, just as an arm is closely linked to a soldier, so are preserving and observing the Law essential for the monotheistic believer in God.

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\(^{38}\) Skladny (Spruchsamlungen, 71–82) and Philip Davies (Scribes and Scholars: The Canonization of the Hebrew Scriptures [LAI; Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998] 137) argue that Book of Proverbs is predominantly secular and thus do not belong to the religious authorship but rather to a secular scribe with some religious themes which are incorporated into the proverbial text such as Prov 30:5, 9.

\(^{39}\) Cf. Williamson, Isaiah 1–5, 394.

The disapproval of the ungodly behavior in v. 6 is a warning to the “Ungodly Hypocrite.” The distortion of God’s words v. 6 is the false presentation and interpretation of God in v. 1 (cf. Job 16:3; Ps 105:28), while the phrase “would prove yourself to be deceptive” invokes every sort of idolatry, polytheism, paganism or heresy against the official religion of Israel.

The religious deviation expressed by the rejection of God’s function in the world links the apostasy declared by the term לְאִּיתִּיאֵל of v. 1 and repeated by the noun שָׁוָא (“heresy”) of v. 8. The ungodliness and ungodly behavior are the main issues in Proverbs 30, where, with the description of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” (vv. 11–17), the “Godly Believer” elaborates on the phenomenon of wealth in society as the cause of ungodliness and misery as the desacralization of society. The misery of the people is closely linked to the ungodly hierarchy, which both drive the poor society to steal and thus to transgress God’s precepts and desecrate the name of God.

Apostasy concerns a personal explanation of belief, which is characterized by דְבַר־כָזָב (“the false interpretation”) of religious matters in v. 1, which here can be defined as “heresy.” Apostasy and heresy are compatible terms, the first of which refers to rejecting the truth about God as expressed by the Law, while the second involves the area of statements, interpretations and behaviors that do not belong to the official religion.

With the diacope מִמֶּנִּי in v. 7 and v. 8, the “Godly Believer,” appealing to God’s precepts, expresses the opposition between closeness to God and the alienation of apostasy and heresy. In addition, misery and abundance are not oxymora here but rather synonyms of a common curse. An oxymoron is represented by the curse and blessing, with the juxtaposition of the “apostasy” in v. 1 and “heresy” in v.

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41 Gersonides “interprets the entire v. 9 as a philosophical warning: ‘Lest I be satiated’ with incorrect ideas and ‘deny,’ thereby inventing a nonexistent deity who will lead me to total apostasy” (Kravitz and Olitzky, Mishlei, 296).


43 Alonso Schökel (A Manual, 92) regarding Prov 30:8 asserts: “Prov 30,8 rejects two extreme in order to choose the middle ground. This does not mean that there are only three possibilities. The middle ground lies between and is opposed to whatever lies at the sides.”
8. “The curse of misery and abundance” is alienation from God and links up with the preceding “heresy” of v. 8. Abundance, furthermore, recalls the hypocrisy of observing the law without living it. Thus, ungodly hypocrisy is presented in v. 9, elaborated in vv. 10–15a and ultimately condemned by vv. 15b–17. The repetition of ungodliness by desecrating the name of God in v. 9 confirms the functional negation of God according to the “Ungodly Hypocrite’s” perspective. The expression וְאָמַרְתִּי מִי יְהוָה (“and I said: ‘Who is God?’”) demonstrates disregard for the Creator by his creature, which, in reality, establishes a chasm between God and the ungodly. Moreover, the word אִוָּרֵש (“taking what does not belong to me”) in v. 9 recalls רָעֵשׁ (“do not give [curse] me”) of v. 8, and, thus, the opposition between taking and giving appears, where the curse by God in v. 8 necessarily follows the acceptance of sin and ungodliness. In addition, the desacralization by taking what does not belong to godly people refers not only to stealing but also to taking any kind of ungodly action that may desacralize the religion.

3.3: The Consumption of the “Godly Believer” in vv. 11–15a

The verb אשם in Prov 30:10 corresponds to the term מִּשְפָט in Exod 20:1, where respect for the divine statutes is mandatory and essential for the religious relation observer-God and social relation oestensible “observer”-observer. The succession of themes in Proverbs 30 corresponds to the thematic succession in Exodus 20, where the relation observer-God is first cited. The perspective of Proverbs 30 goes in a similar direction, where after the solid argument for God’s activity in the world (vv. 1–4), the relationship observer-God (vv. 5–9) and children-parents in v. 11 (cf. Exod 20:12) is presented. After citing the relationship of the ostensible “observer-observer, the “Godly Believer” presents various categories of those who feign to observe God’s commandments. Thus, the violation of the close children-parents relationship in Prov 30:11 runs contrary to the commandment about the close children—parents

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46 A very similar theme of “maintaining justice for the poor” is also found in Prov 28:15–16; 29:14 and 31:5–9. See Sandoval, The Discourse of Wealth, 184–86.
relationship in Exod 21:12 and Deut 5:16. The negation of נר in v. 11 (cf. Num 23:25; 2 Kgs 4:29; Job 31:20) additionally emphasizes transgression of God’s Law.\footnote{Clines (Job 1–20, p. 39) notes: “the concept of a ‘blessing’ as some kind of wish or gift directed towards humans by God or by others, or as J. Sharbert (TDOT 1:303) emphasizes, ‘to strengthen solidarity with individuals and groups with whom [the one blessing] has or seeks particularly close social, racial, and religious relationship.’”} The defilement of the “pure eyes,” and “shining righteousness” (cf. Job 33:26; Ps 52:5) in Prov 30:12 is a manifestation of sinfulness (cf. Deut 24:13). In addition, the noun נבר has a cultic nuance in v. 11 (cf. Lev 22:6; 2 Kgs 5:13) and, thus, corresponds to religiously defiled people who face excommunication from the religious society (cf. Num 19:20). The self-sufficiency cited in Prov 30:13 alludes to people of high rank in society. Insensitivity toward the poor includes scorn toward people of a lower social class or the poor and needy. Ultimately, Prov 30:14–15a is dealing with injustice and the consumption of the godly people. The sequence of vv. 11–14 moves from the visible transgression of God’s commandment in v. 11, through unrighteousness in v. 12 and scorn in v. 13, to injustice in vv. 14–15a, which is ultimately anti-human and destructive.

The intention of the author is to present the real ungodliness and nothingness expressed not only by the theory of v. 1 but most of all by the practices referenced in vv. 11–15a.

The intention of the “Godly Believer” in vv. 10–15a is to expose the feigning of the “Ungodly Hypocrite.” The facts cited in vv. 11–15a serve to expose his hidden character. His private life is now brought to light. God’s commandment, according to the godly witness, has been violated (cf. v. 11). The social position of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” is described as abusive and discriminatory (cf. v. 12). The “Ungodly Hypocrite’s” insensitivity toward others, exploitation of the subjected and scorn are now made manifest (cf. v. 13). Finally, the secret intention of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” to destroy and annihilate the “Godly Believer” is highlighted in vv. 14–15a (cf. Pss 14:4; 53:5).\footnote{Cf. Terrien, The Psalms II, 165.} The hypothetical definition of nothingness with the same verb המח with the very beginning of Prov 30:1 and the realization of the consumption of righteous people (again המח) at the conclusion of v. 14 present nothingness, not in the
symbolic or hypothetical theological sense, but in its real and practical meaning of destroying everything godly in society. In other words, according to the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” nothingness would be linked to the elimination of each of God’s activities among humanity (v. 1), while according to the “Godly Believer” “nothingness” is presented in the concrete manner of the destruction and consumption of godly people. Thus, the “Godly Believer” gradually reaches real wickedness with the appropriate title of the “Leech” in v. 15a, as a synonym for the “Ungodly Hypocrite” and wicked people in general who destroy others, as figuratively expressed by the sucking of others’ blood to achieve the goal of the total consumption of godly men.

3.4: The Curse of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” in vv. 15b–17

Verse 15b recapitulates vv. 11–15a, while in v. 17 the “Godly Believer” curses the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” who represents the wicked generation. The curse of v. 17 includes not only the sin of children against parents but also implicitly all the sins and transgressions mentioned in vv. 10–15a.

Verses 15b–17 include the realities death and life, and the elements of water and fire, where, in chiastic form, the reality of death corresponds to the element of fire as a symbol of the consumption of human life, while a lack of water on earth is linked to the destruction of human life. Again, the verb אכּל, alluding to material food, is a formula for consumption and death, not only in vv. 1 and 14 but also in v. 17. The “Godly Believer,” in comparing the realities of death and life, which correspond to righteousness and wickedness, relativizes both by referring to the ultimate vanishing or consumption of humanity. Thus, the death of human beings includes both those who are marginalized in society as well as those who are privileged. In addition, death, to some extent, can also be related to oppressed people who perish by the fire of intolerance and external oppression. Conversely, life that is related to water in the

49 Heim (Poetic Imagination, 502) also argues that “the connection between 30:17 and 30:11 is further strengthened by the recurrence of the word ‘eyes’ in 30:12 and 30:13."


desert clearly symbolizes an insatiable ungodly population that destroys godly people. In short, the “capsule of death” represents an ungodly population exterminated by the element of fire, while “the capsule of life” signifies the righteous people who are consumed by insatiable (desert) living beings (water). Thus, the “Leech” is appropriate name for an insatiable (desert) living being (water) who exploits others and whose illusion of lasting enjoyment of earthly goods is relativized by a paradoxical exchange of ideas, where both life and death vanish by themselves and sink into the reality of transcendence and the unknown.

The opposition between the mother who is obedient to her husband (יִּקֲהַת־אֵם) in v. 17 and the son of the “Obedient” (בִּן־יָקֶּה) who is disobedient to God in v. 1 is embodied in the person of the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” who is obliged to be obedient to God’s commandments but in reality ignores all of God’s precepts. Here, subjection to God is in parallelism to the response of the rejection of subjection by the “Ungodly Hypocrite” to God’s commandments and the acceptance of the obligation to obey God’s rules (cf. Gen 3:16; Prov 31:10–31) by the “Godly Believer.” In addition, the “eye” in v. 17 corresponds to the wicked “generation” in vv. 11–14 and is related to the human character or personality that destroys the human justice established by God (cf. Exodus 21). 52

3.5: Consumption of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” in vv. 18–20

Having characterized wicked people with the elements presented in v. 16, the “Godly Believer” proceeds to speak of the elimination of the wicked by the elements and emotions in vv. 18–20. There are two perspectives in vv. 18–20. The first is the paradox between the negative qualification of the characters (scavenger, serpent, ship and rake) and the neutral view of the natural elements and human emotions (sky, rock, sea and woman-virgin). The four manners of the consumption of the four active characters in vv. 18–20 demonstrate their annihilation, where their innate predispositions are presented as

metaphors for acquired human positions, which “corrode” and vanish not under the visible oppressor represented by the “predator” but due to the unlimited “partner” who insensibly consumes the limited character. The sky is presented as the partner of the scavenger, which by its limitlessness transcends the flier’s limitations. The rock or the ground is presented as the partner of the serpent, which by its limitlessness transcends the creeper’s limitations. In addition, the sea is presented as the partner of the ship, which by its limitlessness is not coherent with the ship’s dimensions and, finally, the girl’s purity, which is not coherent with the rake’s sinfulness.53

The symbolism in vv. 18–20 is remarkable. The paradox of the negative perspective of the scavenger and the positive perspective of the sky is presented in v. 19a. This paradox raises the question of how the positive sky can support the negative scavenger. The response to the question is the consumption of the scavenger. The unclean bird of prey is confronted by the element of infinity. The unlimited passive power of the sky absorbs the limited active power of the scavenger. Since the scavenger does not have a natural predator, its predator becomes the powerful element of the sky itself, which consumes the active scavenger.

The paradox between the positive perspective of the solid rock or earth and the negative perspective of the serpent is presented in v. 19b. How can a positive and immense element such as rock support the negative character of the serpent? The response to the question is the consumption of the serpent. The earthly solid state of rock represents an unlimited element, which passively accepts the active serpent. The rock as a symbol of shelter and protection now opens itself to an active but limited unclean predator. The receptive element of the rock is at the same time also where the serpent loses its

53 As a comment on v. 19, Kravitz and Olitzky (Mishlei, 299) write: “Gersonides thinks that knowing about these four things may be counterintuitive with one’s sensibility. “When we watch any of these things, we may not be anticipating the action that is to follow. Watching an eagle fly is to know that the bird is seeking prey. Watching the snake is to know that the creature is about to strike and kill. Watching the ship as it moves further into the sea is to be aware of the possibility of its sinking. And watching the almah (‘young woman’ not b’tulah, ‘virgin’) is to know that illicit sex is intended.”
power as an aggressive predator. The immense passive element of the rock confronts the aggressive but limited activity of the serpent and neutralizes the serpent’s action.

The unfriendly power presented by the character of the ship is paradoxically connected with the immensity of the sea in v. 20a. The noun לֵב (“heart”) with the preposition ב is seldom used for things and here could reflect mythopoetic power.\textsuperscript{54} The sea, which “conjures up the image of primeval chaos,”\textsuperscript{55} is also a natural “part of the world created by God”\textsuperscript{56} (cf. Genesis 1; Ps 24:2). The sea is presented as a power controlled solely by God (Exod 15:1–18; Job 38: 8–10; Ps 104:6; Isa 50:2). God is the only one who “makes a way in the sea” (Isa 43:16). The sea as a distant place that no one can ever reach (cf. Job 38:16) is paradoxically compared with the ship. The surprise of the paradoxically receptive sea for the ship lies in its “temper,” which can turn against the active and aggressive ship and destroy it. The question arises how the sea, which is only receptive to God,\textsuperscript{57} can also be receptive to a ship. The answer lies in the vanishing of the active ship into the immensity of the passive sea.

The negative connotation of the noun גֶּבֶּר (“the rake”) in v. 20b constitutes the culmination of the preceding questions and corresponds to the previous negative connotations of the scavenger, serpent and ship. The paradoxical relationship between the impure “rake” and pure girl poses the question of why the virgin submits to the “rake.”\textsuperscript{58} The answer lies in the consumption of the “rake” as a result of his emotions of desire and passion for the woman. The activity of the “rake,” presented as negative in character, and the acceptance of the girl, presented as positive (pure) in character, correspond to the previous characterizations but also the mutual animosity of the scavenger that consumes the serpent and the ship that consumes the “rake” (cf. the comparison of galley and oarsman in Chapter Two).

\textsuperscript{54} “In Canaanite mythology, the personified Yamm or Sea was one of Baal’s chief rivals.” (Dahood, \textit{Psalms I}, 279).
\textsuperscript{55} Williamson, \textit{Isaiah 1–5}, 408.
\textsuperscript{57} Ibid. 91–99.
\textsuperscript{58} Cf. Kieweler, \textit{Erziehung}, 189.
The juxtaposition of גֶּבֶּר as the “rake” in v. 19b and אִשָּׁה as the “adulteress” in v. 20 highlights an active and persuasive searching for sinfulness. The common intention of the “rake” and “adulteress” corresponds to the confrontations of the scavenger and the sky, the serpent and the rock, and the ship and the sea. The “Godly Believer” is wondering about all these worldly confrontations but, at the same time, cites them as existing realities, which are accursed in themselves and, thus, bound to be destroyed through consumption by the elements and the emotions.

The “Ungodly Hypocrite” presented in the figure of the “rake” represents an unbalanced personality with a “perverse mind” (Ps 101:7), as the polar opposite of “integrity of mind” (Ps 101:2), one who cannot control his desires and passions, which ultimately become his consumers in the same way as does the sky for the scavenger, the rock for the serpent, and the sea for the ship.

3.6: The Disapproval of Unbalanced Society in vv. 21–23

The quaking of the earth cited in vv. 21–23 is a very strong characterization of the subsequent pairings. The oxymora butler and king in v. 22a; the shameless man and noble in v. 22b; the shameless woman and wife or mother in v. 23a, and the maidservant and mistress in v. 23b are examples of extreme social and moral opposites. The idea of an incredible situation that turns into a scandalous state of affairs is presented here as the continuation of the overturning of the position of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” in vv. 1–4; 10–15a; 15b–17; 18–20.

The “Godly Believer,” emphasizing the discrepancy between high social position and disregard for God’s commandments by those who should promote and keep them, sees the present situation in society as a paradox, where the reversal of seemingly unchangeable and important positions and changeable and insignificant positions occurs. Not only are antitheses between positions presented here, but also between physical and social relationships. Physically, the subjects can be very close to each

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other, but socially they are on very different levels. In addition, the idea of aggressiveness or immorality is also present here when the supposed impossibility of a situation becomes a scandalous reality that also can be the result of an accursed society.

The high position of the king is compromised by the lowly office of the butler in v. 22a. The polarization between the two positions seems unmistakably immutable. The question arises of how the position of a reigning king could be usurped by someone who ordinarily could not become a king. The answer to the question leads to a curse, where the situation can only be explained by the curse of the kingdom, which ultimately has a major impact on society. Thus, the oxymora of the physical and social relationships are presented paradoxically, where the social relationship between the king and butler supplants the physical closeness between the king and his butler. The aggressiveness of the immoral act of taking an inappropriate position highlights the situation of an accursed society.\(^6\)

The position of the shameless man as a member of high society is the focus of the following scandalous observation, which the “Godly Believer” presents in v. 22b. The ascent of a person of low social status to the position of king takes place in v. 22. The relationship between the “rake” in v. 19d and the shameless man in v. 22b is parallel. Both are persons who, due to their base passions, are not suitable for any service or position in society. The aggressiveness of their immoral acts is a manifestation of an accursed society.

The master of the shameless man in v. 22b is followed by that of the shameless woman in v. 23a. A relationship between an immoral woman and moral wife and mother is unthinkable. The “Godly

\(^6\) Block (The Book of Ezekiel 1–24, 355) sees historical evidence in Prov 30:21–23 of the shifting of the lower class to a “new aristocracy” in Israel after grasping the opportunist situation afforded by the death of Nebuchadnezzar. Block compares Jer 11:14–21 with Prov 30:21–23 and finds that the disputation of Jer 11:14–21 affirms that those who occupy positions of authority must beware of the tendency of power to corrupt. The vacuum left by Nebuchadnezzar’s banishment of Jerusalem’s established ruling class had provided many from the lower strata with opportunities for leadership. But this class of nouveaux noblesse had become tyrannical in their disposition of their duties.
Believer” juxtaposes the unacceptable behavior of the shameless woman in v. 23a and the closely related figure of the adulteress in v. 20. The conflict between sinfulness/immorality and the high moral institution of marriage is underscored in v. 23a. In external appearance, the women are physically similar, but the moral behavior of the one is antithetical to that of the other. A scandalous situation arises when the physical and moral qualities are mixed together. The aggressiveness of the immoral act bespeaks an accursed society.

The oxymoron of the maidservant and mistress parallels the oxymoron of the butler and king, with the mistress again representing the high social hierarchy, while the maidservant is a representative of the lowest social class. The physical and natural relation of maidservant–mistress turns into the unnatural situation of mistress–“mistress,” where the high social position of the mistress is degraded by the lowly position of maidservant. Here again, the idea of aggressiveness is presented when a situation of physical proximity is replaced by a socially incompatible reversal of status.

The pretension of the butler, shameless man, shameless woman and maidservant is not based on their positive human qualities but on the negative human aspiration to take the place of or replace someone they are not socially or morally capable of replacing. The result of such overturning of the social statuses manifests an accursed society:

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<tr>
<th>butler-king</th>
<th>→ “king”-king</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>shameless man-noble</td>
<td>→ “noble”-noble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shameless woman-wife and mother</td>
<td>→ “wife and mother”-wife and mother</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maid-mistress</td>
<td>→ “mistress”-mistress</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.7: Accord with the Creative Order in the World in vv. 24–28

The pretensions or aspirations of inadequate and irresponsible people to acquire demanding and responsible positions in society presented in vv. 21–23 are contrasted with the creative professions and appropriate positions of responsible people in vv. 24–28. The “Godly Believer” contrasts those who by their scandalous manner have achieved their positions in society with those who are positionally in accordance with their service in society. The failure of inadequate aspirants in vv. 21–23 and the achievement of suitable professionals in vv. 24–28 characterize these two segments of the chapter, where complaints against authority and praise of wise labors highlight the main theme of ungodly hypocrisy in Proverbs 30 (cf. Qoh 10:5–7).  

The disproportion between insignificant subjects such as ants and rock hyraxes on the one hand and the locusts and the lizards with their respectable achievements on the other hand is the main idea of the segment of vv. 24–28. The thematic succession in the segment might also allude to the different classes in society, where ants represent the institution or kingdom, while rock hyraxes, locusts and lizards represent society without official authority. The royal elements in vv. 27 and 28 may also allude to a society without an army (v. 27) and a society under the control of another kingdom (v. 28).

The key word for the overall interpretation of vv. 24–28 is the plural noun חֲכָמִים, which denotes the anthropomorphism of “people of aptitude” in general but also respect toward them. “Aptitude” denotes the capability to achieve the best result. “People of aptitude” demonstrate the chasm between

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62 Temper Longman III, *The Book of Ecclesiastes* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998) 241; a similar account is also found in Akkadian Admonitions of Ipu-Wer, see *ANET*, 441–44.

63 Ansberry (*Be Wise, My Son, and Make My Heart Glad*, 173) relying on Forti’s interpretation of the four animals (*Animal Imagery*, 117) states: “In each case, the physical limitations of these creatures (ants, badgers, locusts) are counterbalanced by their intelligence—ants demonstrate industry and foresight to secure provisions, badgers incorporate technical ingenuity to construct an impenetrable fortress, and locusts overcome social disorganization to form a cohesive, integrated group.”

64 Cook (*The Septuagint*, 163), relying on R. L. Giese’s interpretation (“Strength through Wisdom and the Bee in LXX-Prov 6,8a-c,” *Biblica* 73 [1992] 404–11) finds in the LXX’s translation “‘wiser than the wise,’ contrary to the usage of the Hebrew Bible, where the bee (insect) is consistently depicted in negative terms.”
successful (vv. 24–28) and unsuccessful society (vv. 21–23). The term קְטַנֵי does not represent a quantity or physical quality but rather institutional might and influence.

The ants in v. 25 represent a society that is not strong but highly social.\textsuperscript{65} The comparison, however, is not physical but institutional.\textsuperscript{66} A capability of a society like that of ants is to maintain social stability. The periodical limitation of activity (the summer) additionally shows the diligence and concord of such a society. Thus, even though there are two limitations on ant society, physical and temporal, it is able to maintain social stability. The folk represented by ants are symbolic of a weak society subject to many external risks. The author utilizes the image of ants because even a child can demolish an anthill, while it is impossible for anyone to enter a lion pride.

In light of the previous material in v. 25, the succession from an institutionally weak but highly social community continues with the example of rock hyraxes, which, though lacking in power, are able to protect themselves by hiding in unapproachable caves. The image of the rock hyrax demonstrates powerlessness in a society where there is a lack of organization and community. Even though there are two limitations on such a society, sociality and power, its lifestyle is prosperous and protected. Thus, the symbolic image of highly social organizers is followed by that of those who are individualistic but still capable of maintaining the best protection and safety from every external influence that could lead to their demise.

The royal theme of the segment of those who have real aptitudes in society is also presented by the image of locusts. The negative existential particle אֵין could allude here to antiroyalism or even a

\textsuperscript{65} With the image of ants in v. 25, the author does not depict a society without a commander, overseer or ruler, as Estes claims. Cf. Daniel J. Estes, \textit{Hear My Son} (NSBT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997) 90.

\textsuperscript{66} The description of ants as having an autonomous society without “the kinds of motivation, direction and regulation” seems inapplicable to v. 25. Cf. Avivah G. Zornberg, \textit{Malbim on Mishley} (Jerusalem: Feldheim, 1982) 60.
society in a subordinate position to another. However, there are two things absent in the locusts’ society: a monarch and subordination. According to the “Godly Believer,” even without a monarch, it is possible to have an organized society since a clear example of such society already exists in the natural world.

The lizard embodies the oxymoron of lowly social status and personal success. In addition, the ability of a lizard to reach the most protected, intimate and private royal rooms demonstrates its privileged status. The metaphor of lizards and kings’ private palaces may allude to the relationship between a personal servant or eunuch and a king’s harem. There are also things absent in the lizards’ society: power and reputation. The royal allegory of the highest achievement and personal relationship with the king indicates the possibility of prosperity and respect under foreign rule.

3.8: Respect for the King’s Position in vv. 29–31

A “good stride” alludes to an honored position and “good gait” suggests the major theme in the segment of vv. 29–31. A “good stride” denotes high social status in the metaphors of the lion, wild markhor and tame striker and refers to the king and his status among his people. The epithet “good gait” may hint at the military terminology of a king’s army led by the king. The lion, wild markhor, tame striker and the king are all examples of leaders who draw courage from their positions. The high position of the figures cited indicates their authority and responsibility for society.

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The presentation of the alpha lion in v. 30 is not only royal but also military. The anthropomorphic use of the noun גִּבוֹר clearly presents the role of a ruler in society, demonstrating his primacy over the people. The primacy of a head position also requires courage and leadership, alluded to by the term לַיִּש גִּבוֹר in vv. 1 and 19 as an improper leader and sinner now turns into the positive usage of the term גִּבוֹר in reference to a proper ruler who is suitable for society.

The wild markhor and tame striker go together. The wild markhor is not only presented as a leader of its flock but also as an adult with stamina. The stamina of the animals in question also corresponds to the “best choice” for the leader and the satisfaction and obedience of the pride or flock, and allegorically implies an ideal leader on the one hand and the absolute satisfaction of the people on the other hand. Thus, the wild markhor and tame striker connote not only the concept of leadership but also the idea of aptitude or cleverness represented in vv. 24–28.

The images of the alpha lion, alpha wild markhor and tame striler clearly allude to the human figure of the king in v. 31b. The king is the ultimate example of an ideal leader of society who has the obligation to show his ability and capacity in leadership. At the same time, the appropriate response of the people would be satisfaction with their ruler and obedience to their king. In addition, the king “rising among his people” corresponds to the aforementioned relationship of alpha animals with their pride or flock. Moreover, the king, in the parallel to other three examples in the segment, is represented here as the ruler of an entire society and not only of a group, such as a military corpus.71

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71 Ansberry (Be Wise, My Son, and Make My Heart Glad, 175) observes: “The compilation presents a royal, hierarchical vision of the world that is maintained through submission to legitimate authority and the king within the proscribed parameters of the cosmic propriety and social realm. This royal vision reinforces the sapiential concern with social propriety and provides the addressee with a worldview he must adopt, a hierarchy he must maintain.”
3.9: The Way Out: Conversion in vv. 32–33

The conclusion of Proverbs 30 is not a publicly directed “public protest” but a personal warning from a subordinate to a highly positioned person. The caution of the “Godly Believer” in his approach to the “Ungodly Hypocrite” in line with Prov 25:7–8: אַל־תֵצֵא לָרִּב מַהֵר אֲשֶּּר רָאוּ עֵינֶּךָ אֲשֶּּר וֿיִרְבַּה ("what your eyes have seen, do not expose it too fast for protest"), where the subjection of the servant to his superior is underscored.

The shameless provocation cited in v. 1, the shameless deeds exposed through v. 10ff. and the shameless behavior in v. 18ff. correspond to the concluding statement concerning shamelessness in v. 32. The real warning is that the ungodliness has to stop. The prohibition of such speech and deeds is picturesquely expressed by “shutting the mouth” in v. 32, which does not elaborate only on the danger of what was said but is also a prohibition against a similar pronouncement ever being made again. In this regard, the provocation by the “Ungodly Hypocrite” moves the “Godly Believer” to react in such a manner in order to avoid the threat of punishment (cf. v. 10). Self-reflection is supposed to lead the “Ungodly Hypocrite” to conversion.

The detailed images of butter and blood express finality or completion as a result of force. In this regard, the last sentence in v. 33 should be understood as the completion or final result of the “Godly Believer’s” anger about the ungodliness of the action, which is parallel to the metaphor of butter from milk or a bloody nose. In short, the final expression of “protest” in vv. 32–33 is not a neutral general warning but concrete, signifying “this provocation” between the “Godly Believer” and “Ungodly

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Hypocrite” produced by ungodliness and hypocrisy and elaborated through the entire chapter of Proverbs 30 (cf. LXX’s translation of v. 33 in Chapter Two).

4. The Royal Motifs in Proverbs 30

The Book of Proverbs can appropriately be called a collection of royal proverbs because, according to the first verses of Proverbs 1 and 25, these appertain to King Solomon and the royal court in Jerusalem. The first part, Proverbs 1–24, is ascribed to the time of Solomon himself, while the second part, Proverbs 25–29 is connected to the time of King Hezekiah. The so-called appendix, Proverbs 30–31, is also thematically royal. Explicitly royal themes occur randomly in Proverbs but occupy a remarkable amount of space throughout the entire book (cf. Prov 1:1; 8:15; 16:10, 12, 13, 14; 20:2, 8, 26, 28; 22:11, 29; 24:21; 25:1, 2, 3, 5, 6; 29:4, 14; 30:22, 27, 28, 31; 31:1, 3). The royal theme dominates the first part of Proverbs 1–24, where righteousness, mercy and truth, as well as respect for the king are cited, while in the second part, Proverbs 25–29, already at the beginning (Prov 25:2–3) there is mention of the unfathomable heart of a king. The theme continues with the motif of the influence of the wicked on the king (Prov 25:6), with a righteous king who builds up the kingdom and an unrighteous one who tears it down. In Prov 29:14, the king’s righteous behavior toward his subjects is mentioned as characteristic of a righteous king. The unrighteousness of a king is not mentioned in the first part, Proverbs 1–24, while it is openly presented in the second part, Prov 28:15, 16; 29:2, 4, 12; 30:11–14. Thus, the shift from a righteous king in Proverbs 1–24 to a king who is influenced by wickedness and unrighteousness toward his subjects in Proverbs 25–29 is further elaborated in Proverbs 30 (and Proverbs 31), \(^{74}\) where ungodly hypocrisy toward

\(^{74}\) The advice of a righteous mother to an inexperienced son is also a warning against behavior that is not fitting for a king.
godly believers is openly exposed. In this regard, Proverbs 30–31 constitute part of the second collection of Proverbs 25–29 because both thematically correspond to each other.\textsuperscript{75}

The royal motifs in Proverbs 30 are of two kinds. The first is the explicit mention of royal elements, and the second is the implicit allusion to the royal. The explicit royal elements dominate the second half of the chapter, while implicit royal allusions are linked to the first half of Proverbs 30.\textsuperscript{76} The intention of the “Godly Believer” is not to expose the king’s identity openly, which is presented in the first part of Proverbs 30 as ungodly and hypocritical. By comparing the present situation with various examples in the second part of Proverbs 30, the “Godly Believer” demonstrates the importance of the king’s position in society.

4.1: The Explicitly Royal Elements in Proverbs 30

Proverbs 30 can be called royal because, together with Proverbs 16, 20 and 25, it is among the chapters with the most frequent occurrence of the root מְלָכָה. Explicit royal elements show up four times in vv. 22, 27, 28 and 31 of Proverbs 30.

The verb מְלָכָה in v. 22 denotes the establishment of a kingship or the enthronization of a king or queen (1 Sam 13:1; 1 Kgs 3:7; 2 Kgs 11:3; 2 Chr 36:20; Esth 2:17; Hos 8:4). The utilization of the verb מְלָכָה in v. 22 also denotes the establishment of kingship by an inappropriate personality.\textsuperscript{77} The presentation of the extreme social situation in vv. 21–23 begins with the devaluation and depreciation of the king’s position in society. In addition, the emphasis in vv. 21–23 is not that some of the cases


\textsuperscript{76} Cf. Scherer, Das weise Wort, 12–17.

\textsuperscript{77} Steinmann (Proverbs, 610) sees a climactic irony in vv. 21–23, where the slave girl “cannot really replace her mistress.”
mentioned are unfeasible, but rather that such cases cause destruction of the social pyramid and overturning of the established ranks in society (if the butler of a king can reign, then the king can also become a butler). Thus, the opposition of reigning and serving is presented in v. 22. In other words, kingship is the highest position in society, while servitude is the lowest position. Since there is no parallel between them, the chasm is simply unsurpassable and irreversible. The presentation of the king in v. 22 shows him as highly honored and privileged in society. Thus, the king occupies a position that requires suitable attitudes, which are not those of a butler.

The segment vv. 25–28 presents another function of a king in society. The organization of a society and its success is the exclusive responsibility of the king. The leadership of the king consists of his ability to rule the kingdom. The success of the king is manifested by the satisfaction of the entire society. The example of the locust without a king hints at human society without an organized hierarchy. Thus, the marvel of the organization of a society without a king is emphasized by the example of a locusts’ colony without a leader. In this regard, the ordinary situation for a society is to be led by its leader or king. In addition, to avoid the possibility that a butler could reign or a shameless man improperly rise to a high position in society (v. 22) or that a shameless woman and a maidservant could pervert the institution of marriage (v. 23), a king is required who will control and maintain religious, moral and social stability in society.

The relationship between the lizard and the king is mentioned in in v. 28. The approach to the king is limited and requires special permission, especially for persons from different classes and peoples.

78 Douglas Stuart (Hosea–Jonah, p. 242) sees in locusts “the enemy’s strength and devastation” of a foreign nation (cf. Joel 1:6), while Aubrey R. Johnson (The Cultic Prophet and Israel’s Psalmody [Cardiff: University of Wales, 1979] 135) links the noun עַמָּם with the army of locusts (cf. Joel 2:2).

79 Even though the plural “locusts” regularly alludes to a foreign force, the unexpected reference to the singular “locust” without a king may hint at Israel as a vassal of Assyria. The intention of the author may be to encourage his society to find the modus vivendi in this extraordinary or emergency state. Cf. Luckenbill, The Annals, 33.
The position of the lizard is both ignored due to its unimportance but also privileged due to its proximity to the king. At the same time, the lizard’s position does not threaten or compromise the position of the king and can only be beneficial. Again, the lizard could also be an allegory of the vassal position of a kingdom. The society without a king presented by the singular “locust” in v. 27 and the insignificant society represented by the “lizard” in v. 28 could be a gezerech shawah of Israel’s king without authority and Israel as a kingdom under the dominion of another kingdom.

The authority of the king and kingship is vividly expressed in the segment of “The Respect for the King’s Position” in vv. 29–31. All three subjects in vv. 29–31, the alpha lion, the wild markhor and the tame striker, symbolize the human rule of the king. The presentation of the king concerns not only his leadership or role but also his responsibility, to be an example and model for the entire society, over which he rules. Thus, the king in v. 31 represents a leader who stands before the people as the first in society and is the head, able to lead, govern and represent every class and every citizen of the kingdom.

4.2: The Implicitly Royal Elements in Proverbs 30

It has already been stated that the implicit royal elements of Proverbs 30 imbue the first half of the chapter with a negative perception of royalty. The terms used in Proverbs 30 that allude to royalty are structurally interrelated. The structure of the “Unbalanced Society” in vv. 21–23, where, for the first time in the chapter, an explicit royal reference occurs, corresponds to the “Disapproval of the Unbalanced Society” in vv. 5–9, where the military metaphor of the arm in v. 5 denotes God’s protection not only of the faithful people (cf. Ps 84:13) but particularly of the king (cf. Gen 15:1). In the same way, the section “Accord with the Creative Order in the World” of vv. 24–28, where the noun מֶלֶךְ is used twice, corresponds to the section “Discord with the Creative Order in the World” in vv. 2–4, where speculation

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80 Cf. Ansberry, Be Wise, My Son, and Make My Heart Glad, 175.
81 Gordon J. Wenham, Genesis 1–15, 327.
leads to a society without order. Similarly, the segment “Affirmation of the King’s Role in the World” in vv. 29–31 corresponds to the “Degradation of God’s Role in the World” in v. 1, as a universal exemplar of sovereignty and kingship.

The very first word of the chapter, דִּבְרֵי, already indicates words, utterance or a matter of an authority figure, such as the just (cf. דִּבְרֵי צַדִּיקִּ in Deut 16:19) or wise (cf. דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִּים in Prov 1:6). A similar construction is also used for the words of God (cf. יְהוָה דִּבְרֵי in 1 Sam 15:1) but also for the words of Nehemiah (cf. נְחֶמְיָה דִּבְרֵי in Neh 1:1) or those of Qohelet (cf. דִּבְרֵי קֹהֶלֶת in Qoh 1:1) and, especially, the words of King David (cf. דוֹפוֹ דִּבְרֵי in 2 Sam 23:1; 1 Kgs 11:41; 14:19). Constructions such as דִּבְרֵי־הַיָמִים (“accounts of the chronicles”) in 1 Chr 27:24; דִּבְרֵי הַתּוֹרָה (“paragraphs of the Law”) in 2 Chr 34:19; or אֶת־דִּבְרֵי הַבְרִית (“the matters of the covenant”) in Exod 34:28 suggest that the opening words of Proverbs 30 are those of someone important and worthy of the reader’s attention.

The construction נְאֻם in v. 1a also implies important information about the “Youth,” where the term also implies similarity to the father (cf. Judg 8:18). The term נְאֻם is closely related to נְאֻם, which is associated with the highest authority and used regularly for God’s pronouncements, such as נְאֻם־יְהוָה, but also for a pronouncement such as נְאֻם בִּלְעָם (“Bil’am’s matter”) in Num 24:3 or נְאֻם דָוִד (“David’s matter”) in 2 Sam 23:1. The matter proclaimed by the noun נְאֻם in v. 1 highlights the importance not only of the message that is going to be proclaimed but also of its sender. In this sense, the name of the sender is purposely omitted because the provocative and dangerous pronouncement that is about to be made could affect the wider public.
The use of the *self-denial* pronoun אָנָּה, in v. 2, corresponds to Revell’s theory of subjection, where the “I” corresponds to a person subject to another who is socially highly positioned. The difference in social status between the sender of the provocative message of “ungodliness” and the responder to the provocation suggests understanding Proverbs 30 as a provocation by a king and the response of a servant. Thus, the provocation itself is presented as inappropriate for the author just as the response is inappropriate for the responder.

The “hypocrite” and “desacralization” are closely related to the curse of wealth in v. 9. The perversion of the rich class impoverishes the poor people and drives them to commit transgressions and the desacralization of their religion. The perversion in v. 9, as an abuse of the religion and subjugated people, also corresponds to the relationship lord–servant.

The title רַבָּן (“the master”) is closely related to the noun רְאוֹן (“lord”), without the definite article in v. 10, and again characterizes the relationship lord–servant, which is explicitly expressed as that of king–servant in v. 22. The high status of the lord (cf. Judg 3:25; 2 Sam 2:7; see also 2 Kgs 19:4) or someone who has others under his rule (1 Kgs 22:17; Prov 27:18; 30:10) recurs throughout Proverbs 30 (cf. vv. 1, 2, 10, 22, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31). The repeated mention of dishonoring parents also shows a parents-children relationship in vv. 11–15a and 15b–17. In addition, the Youth of v. 1 could be someone closely related to the lord in a father–son relationship and additionally supported by the domestic parents–children relationship (vv. 11–15a; 15b–17). The powerful generation, who despises and threatens the “Godly Believer” in v. 14, also alludes to authorities in society, who by exploiting their high social position abuse the innocent and subjugated people in society.

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Finally, the noun גֶּבֶּר without the article in v. 19d corresponds to the noun הַגֶֶּבֶּר in v. 1b. The “rake’s” bullying approach toward the girl is presented as similar to the rough approach of the rich toward their oppressed subjects in vv. 9, 10–15a and 15b–17.84

In Proverbs 30, the royal elements extend throughout the chapter. The implicit royal allusions in the first half of the chapter correspond to the explicit royal expressions in the second half. Thus, the lexemes דבְּרֵי and בְּיָקֵן of v. 1a correspond to נְאֻם הַגֶּבֶּר in v. 1b, and are structurally related to the high position and duty of the king in vv. 29–31. In the same way, the critical presentation of the “Discord with the Creative Order in the World” elaborated by a person introduced with self-denial אנ כִּי is in parallel with the “Accord with the Creative Order in the World” in vv. 24–28, where the king is presented as the head and chief organizer of the society. In addition, the hypocrisy referred to v. 9 corresponds to the inappropriate position of the king in vv. 21–23. Likewise, the noun אדוֹן in v. 10 and the interpretation of the abusive hypocrite in v. 15 correspond to the bullying “rake” in v. 19 and together create a structural network throughout Proverbs 30. This structure can be represented as follows:

A) Way in: The sin (v. 1)

B) v. 1a-b, Masters’ authority

C) vv. 2 – 4, Self-denial of subjugated individual in the realm

D) vv. 5–9, rich/hypocrite

E) vv. 10–15a, “Ungodly Hypocrite”

F) vv. 15b–17, Curse of the “Ungodly Hypocrite”

E’) vv. 18–20, Bully rake

D’) vv. 21–23, Inadequate king

C’) vv. 24–28, Emphasis of the king in the realm

B’) vv. 29–31, King’s position

A’) Way out: The conversion (vv. 32–33)

The above structure shows how the author intertwines the subject of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” throughout the chapter, contrasting his ungodliness with the godly society. Regardless of the way in, as in the introduction to sin in v. 1, or the way out, as in the call to conversion in v. 32–33, the curse and consumption of the ungodly follows the destruction of the godly.
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS

The “provocation” in Proverbs 30 is presented as an “Ungodly Hypocrite’s” personal statement, which has had a profound impact on society. The words of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” are presented in v. 1 and his acts in vv. 11–14, with the consequences cited in vv. 18–20 and 21–23. Although his name is not mentioned explicitly, titles such as the “Youth” or “Master” are indicative of his high position.

1. Why Is the Message Ungodly?

Ungodliness is the first stage in the discrepancy among the position, words and deeds of the provocateur in v. 1. The denial of the function of God among God’s chosen people disrupts the coherence of the salvific history of God with them (cf. v. 5–6), a contradictio in se and, thus, has to be rejected.¹

2. Why Is It a Provocation?

A provocation is “action or speech that makes someone angry, especially deliberately.”² The anger and protest expressed in Proverbs 30 (cf. v. 33) are consequences of an ungodly statement that was made deliberately, eliciting a reaction from someone among the audience. The provocation is epistemologically elaborated (vv. 2–4) and directly rebuked (vv. 6 and 33) as an incorrect statement that has to be rejected (v. 32).

The angry curse in v. 17 is a direct reaction to the provocation of v. 1. In other words, the statement of ungodliness in v. 1 and the wickedness in vv. 11–15a are negated and rejected by this curse, as prescribed by the Law (cf. Deut 21:23; 27:26). The oxymora of the ungodly man who provokes ungodliness and the godly man who curses ungodliness are presented in the first half of the chapter in vv. 1–17. However, the sin against God and social justice is committed by someone who cannot easily be

suspended or removed from society. Furthermore, the ungodly person occupies a position that can be used against the godly person (cf. vv. 2, 10, 14–15a). In this regard, the godly person is representative of God’s people and observers of the Law, while the ungodly person is representative of arrogant ungodly people who, in reality, do not accept the God of Israel but provoke God and violate the Law. Although the ungodly provocateur does not have a “natural predator,” he can still be condemned and so destroy himself through natural elements and human emotions (cf. Prov 30: 18–20).

3. Why is the Provocation Hypocritical?

The provocation by the ungodly person in Proverbs 30 is primarily directed against Israel’s religion and God-fearing society (cf. vv. 1, 4, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 18–20; 21–23), while the reaction of the godly person is in favor of Israel’s religious and God-fearing society (cf. vv. 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 17, 24–28, 29–31, 32, 33). At the same time, the statements of the ungodly person are destructive but still not definitive as long as there is a way out of sin (cf. Gen 49:7; Deut 33:1–10 ; vv. 6, 10, 33 and LXX translation of v. 1).3

There is a dichotomy between the ungodly who govern the people and the godly who serve the societal hierarchy. In addition, if God’s revealing word and God’s statutes exist (cf. vv. 5–9), if there are natural examples of coherence in God’s world (cf. vv. 24–28, 29–31), and if there is a concrete people of God who observe and follow the divine statutes (cf. vv. 5, 6, 9), then the problem lies not in the existence of God’s requirements or God’s people who already observe the Law, but rather with the rulers who have the power either to keep and promote or disobey and ignore God’s statutes.

Since the reproach by the godly person to the ungodly person concerns God’s revealing word, the conclusion is that the ungodly person is part of the same society as the godly one (cf. v. 6) but, instead of  

3 Wright, Old Testament, 54–57.
promoting God’s precepts, promotes his own wrongdoings. In addition, since the oxymoron of God’s society and an ungodly leader of society is presented in Proverbs 30, the only way to lead God’s people but at the same time to scorn God’s precepts is to act hypocritically (vv. 8–9, 11–14, 18–20).

4. Who Then Might the “Ungodly Hypocrite” Be?

It is obvious that the provocation cited in Proverbs 30 could neither have been made by someone who openly and publicly denies the rule of God in the Israelite history of salvation nor by someone who openly and faithfully follows the commandments and statutes of God. The incongruity between the position and deeds of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” has already been noted. The identity of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” in Proverbs 30 is unknown. To offer some suggestions who the “Ungodly Hypocrite” might be, it is necessary to turn back to the question about the composition of the Book of Proverbs.

The Book of Proverbs is divided into two main collections, one that is explicitly King Solomon’s collection (Proverbs 1–9 and 10–24) and the other, although also considered as Solomon’s, actually belongs to the collection from King Hezekiah’s rule (Proverbs 25–31). Both the kings Solomon and Hezekiah were sovereigns of Israel’s Kingdom with their throne in Jerusalem. As previously mentioned, the presentation of the king in Proverbs, while exclusively positive and favorable in Chapters 1–24, becomes negative and critical in Chapters 25 through 31. This shift from a complimentary to a critical perception of the king is also evident in the LXX translation of Proverbs. In addition, according to the MT, Proverbs 30 is part of Hezekiah’s collection, where the negative presentation of the king

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5 Proverbs does not refer to the Northern kingdom after its breakaway from Davidic line.
6 In the superscriptions of the Book of Proverbs, there are only two actual proper names, i.e., Solomon and Hezekiah. Thus, Solomon’s collection comprises Proverbs 1–9 but also 10–24 including the two additional sections in 22:17 and 24:32. Hezekiah’s collection in Proverbs 25–31 also includes two additional sections in Proverbs 30 and 31.
predominates, while in the LXX it is placed as the last chapter of Solomon’s collection in Proverbs 24, where the positive presentation of the king prevails.\textsuperscript{7}

The LXX represents Prov 30:1 as speaking of a good father–repentant son relationship. Given the verbal imperatives of v. 1 φοβήθητι and μετανόει, the translator focuses primarily on the father’s teaching. The imperatives “fear” and “repent” indicate a godly father and a repentant son who is ready to take instruction from his father. The LXX places the godly father and teachable son within Solomon’s collection of Proverbs 1–24. In addition, the father who is instructing the son may represent Solomon himself as the son of his father David or as the father of his son Rehoboam. The advice from David to his son Solomon\textsuperscript{8} is already cited in 1 Kings 2. By contrast, there is no biblical account of such advice from the King Solomon to his son Rehoboam. The possibility of Solomon’s being the author of the content of Proverbs 30 is unlikely, because the LXX presents the father in Proverbs 30 as an obedient and religious man, unlike the description of Solomon in 1 Kings 11. In addition, the description of the son Rehoboam in 2 Chronicles 10 does not correspond to the son who accepts the counsel presented in the LXX’s Prov 30:1.

The question arises as to why the LXX included Proverbs 30 as part of Solomon’s collection and not Hezekiah’s. It may have been in order to present Solomon in a positive light. The LXX’s translation, on the basis of the positive encouragement in v. 1 and the acquisition of superhuman wisdom in v. 3, attributes the material of Proverbs 30 to King Solomon as a fearer of God who gained divine knowledge. This God-fearing attitude of King Solomon is not unique to the compilers of the LXX collection of Solomon’s proverbs, but also occurs in 1 Kings 11 and Neh 13:26, where the authors try to mitigate

\textsuperscript{7} The LXX understands the main subject of Prov 30:1 in positive way, while MT presents it in very negative way. See Chapter One of this dissertation.

\textsuperscript{8} Ibn Ezra sees Prov 30:6 “as reproving Solomon for his actions in marrying more women than prescribed and attempting to judge people without the requisite witnesses.” Kravitz and Olitzky, \textit{Mishlei}, 295.
Solomon’s sins with an excuse. The LXX presentation of Solomon as a God-fearing person who is not an apostate but who transmits his belief in God’s words to his son as a crown (cf. v.5) might be the reason for the repositioning of Proverbs 30 in the LXX to the end of Solomon’s collection (Proverbs 24), in keeping with the positive presentation of the king in Proverbs 1–24, where Solomon is seen as a fearer of God, observer of God’s Law and gainer of divine knowledge (cf. Prov 30:1–4).

Like the LXX, the MT narrows the theme of Proverbs 30 according to its understanding of the very first verse, where the construction בִּנְּיָקֶה and the noun הַגֶּבֶּר occurs as the oxymoron of a godly father and ungodly “Youth,” in which the discrepancy between serving God’s people in righteousness on the one hand and disobedience to God’s precepts and social injustice on other hand plays a main role. Moreover, the “Ungodly Hypocrite” is presented as the son of a godly believer. Thus, the apostate seems to be the son of a godly father. Proverbs 25ff. is attributed to the period of the king Hezekiah, who is presented by the MT as an obedient and good sovereign over Israel (cf. 2 Kings 18–20). By contrast, Hezekiah’s son, as well as other subsequent kings of Israel (or properly, Judah), are presented as having forsaken God’s commandments. Hezekiah’s son and successor, King Manasseh, succeeded Hezekiah when he was twelve years old and showed himself to be an apostate and persecutor of the righteous (cf. 2 Kgs 21:1–26; 2 Chr 33:1–20). In this regard, Manasseh’s behavior is compatible with the description of the “Youth” in Proverbs 30 who is ungodly (v. 1), a persecutor of the righteous (vv. 11–14) and accursed (v. 17) but also called to repentance and conversion (vv. 5–6, 32–33; cf. Deut 33:1–10). The calls to faithfulness in v. 6 and turning away from sin in v. 32 are invitations to return to the righteous way of the

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9 The excuse for negative behavior of Solomon given in 1 Kings 11 and Neh 13:26 involves the negative influence by those surrounding him.
10 Oswalt, Isaiah 1–39, 676.
12 Cf. Thiele, 2 Kings, 155–61; Hobbs, 2 Kings, 304–305.
father. In this sense, the king according to the MT’s Proverbs 30 whose father was an example of a God-fearing life would correspond to Manasseh. “Manasseh was considered the epitome of a wicked king”\(^\text{13}\) and was also known as a shedder of innocent blood and “the martyrdom of faithful.”\(^\text{14}\) In a special way, Manasseh was known as the king of “religious innovations.”\(^\text{15}\) God’s decision to put Judah out of his sight (2 Kgs 24:4; Jer 15:4) according to the Deuteronomist (S) was wholly due to Manasseh’s sin and stubborn refusal to repent, and thus “it was just Manasseh’s sin that entailed the inevitable calamity (cf. 2 Kgs 21:10–15; 23:26–27).”\(^\text{16}\) The Judean kings after Manasseh regularly followed the way of apostasy (except King Josiah; cf. 2 Kings 22ff.). The period after King Hezekiah (6\(^{th}\) century B.C.E.) was a period of rebellious fathers and sons (cf. Ezek 20:18), which also corresponds to the ungodly society presented in Proverbs 30.\(^\text{17}\) Thus, since Proverbs 30 is attributed to Hezekiah’s time; since Manasseh was the king of Israel who deviated from his father Hezekiah’s religion and the official statutes of Israel, and since after Hezekiah the ruling ungodly society is highlighted, hypothetically there are indications for seeing Manasseh as the “Ungodly Hypocrite,” son of the “Obedient,” of Proverbs 30 who promoted ungodliness, scorned Israel’s official religion and practiced wickedness. The call to return to the path of righteousness remains without a response. In 2 Chronicles 33, Manasseh does repent, but in Proverbs 30 leaves it uncertain whether the “Ungodly Believer” ever repented.

\(^{13}\) Craigie, Kelley, Drinkard, *Jeremiah 1–25*, 204.
\(^{14}\) Montgomery and Gehman, *The Books of Kings*, 520.
\(^{15}\) Ibid., 520.
5. The Main Points of This Dissertation

This dissertation highlights three main points about Proverbs 30, which can be summarized in the following conclusions:

1. Proverbs 30 presents a רִיב or “protest” (cf. v. 33) by the “Godly Believer” against the “Ungodly Hypocrite.” The “Godly Believer” expresses his objection in words addressing the “Ungodly Hypocrite’s” ungodly statement (vv. 1–4), ungodly actions (vv. 11–14) and ungodly authority (vv. 18–20, 21–24). The “Ungodly Hypocrite” is a protester (v. 1) and apostate who feigns to be religious (vv. 5–6, 12). The “Godly Believer” is an epistemologist (vv. 2–3), a religious man (v. 4) and a believer (vv. 4–9). The “Ungodly Hypocrite” is a highly positioned person in society (vv. 1, 10, 27, 30) who, by his ungodliness (v. 1, 11), hypocrisy (vv. 8–9, 12), arrogance (v. 13) and disdain (v. 14) consumes the “Godly Believer” (vv. 11–15a), who is, by virtue of his social position, subservient to the “Ungodly Hypocrite” (vv. 1–2, 10). The “Ungodly Hypocrite” is a predator not only of the “Godly Believer” but also of all God-fearing people (vv. 18–20) and the main reason for an unbalanced and “quaking” society (vv. 21–23). By contrast, the curse proclaimed by the “Godly Believer” invokes the definitive consumption or elimination of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” (vv. 15b–17) and the self-destruction of the ungodly society (vv. 18–20). Besides the curse and destruction of ungodly men, the only possibility to recover a balanced society (vv. 24–28) is the conversion or silencing of the ungodly society represented by the “Ungodly Hypocrite” (vv. 5–6; 32–33). Thus, as the head or ruler of the people (vv. 1, 14, 29–31), he is encouraged to repent (v. 5–6), consolidate his position and perform his duties (vv. 29–31) according to the established statutes of God-fearing people (v. 32–33).
2. The characteristic chiastic formula $A \leq B$ in vv. 2–3, 4, 11–14, 15b–17; 18–20; 21–23 and 29–31 shows Proverbs 30 to have a chiastic structure, in which the acts of the “Ungodly Hypocrite” are gradually presented and elaborated. The statement of “ungodliness” and the hypothesis of “nothingness” in v. 1 lead to the denial of ungodliness and nothingness in vv. 2–4 and the rebuke of the ungodly society in the contrast to the balanced and sane society in vv. 5–10. Besides the theoretical ungodliness cited in v. 1, practical ungodliness is presented in vv. 11–15a, elaborated in vv. 15b–16, and repeated and condemned in v. 17. Ultimately, by the acts of self-destruction in vv. 18–20, the rebuke of the ungodly society is followed by vv. 21–23, with encouraging examples of a balanced and sane society in vv. 24–28, as presented by the affirmation of the king’s position in vv. 29–31 and the anticipation of conversion in vv. 32–33.

3. The intention of Proverbs 30 is to silence (v. 33) and put an end to the imbalanced society supported by the ungodly behavior of its ungodly leader, who formally belongs to the God-based society (vv. 1, 5–9) but whose provocation (v. 1) and behavior (vv. 11–14) support the ungodly, hypocritical and arrogant society (vv. 11–14, 21–23) that can only be ended by a curse (vv. 15b–17) and self-destruction (vv. 18–20) or, alternatively, by repentance (vv. 5–6) and conversion (vv. 32–33). The problem of the ungodly society was not as emphasized during the time of the united monarchy of Israel as during Hezekiah’s monarchy and the time of Babylonian exile (cf. Ezekiel 20). Since Proverbs 30 belongs with Hezekiah’s collection, it may date to the rule of the religious and obedient King Hezekiah and his ungodly and apostate son Manasseh.
As for further research, this study has portrayed Proverbs 30 as a verbal expression of an objection to the leader’s ungodly behavior and actions, encouraging him to take the correct path of life in leading his people. The same idea of leadership is presented in Prov 31:1–9, where a warning and caution to a king are presented. The acrostic hymn about a capable woman in Prov 31:10–31 is a concluding masterpiece alluding to a godly and skillful people under the vassalage of a foreign kingdom, which is compared with a woman. Although subject to and dependent on her husband, she behaves in godly manner. She is prosperous, generous and successful within her family. Her behavior contrasts to that of the ungodly, arrogant, deteriorating, self-destructive and unsuccessful leadership presented in Proverbs 30. The interrelationship between Proverbs 30 and 31 is both remarkable and extensive, which would merit further detailed investigation. Since Proverbs 30 and 31 go together, the next step would be an extensive treatment of Proverbs 31. The themes of Proverbs 30 and 31 are compatible parts of biblical wisdom from the period between and after King Hezekiah and the time of Israel’s vassalage and submission to powerful oppressor kingdoms.


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